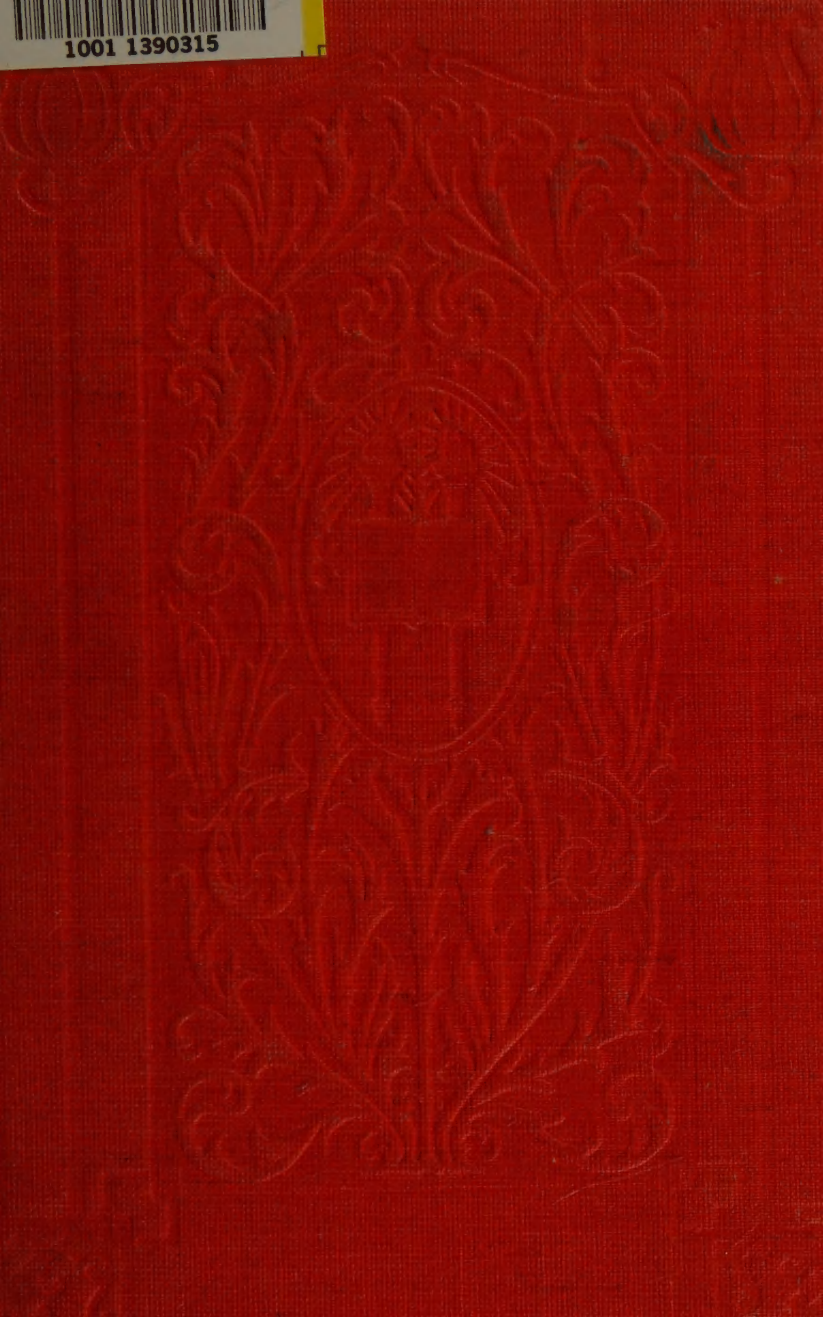




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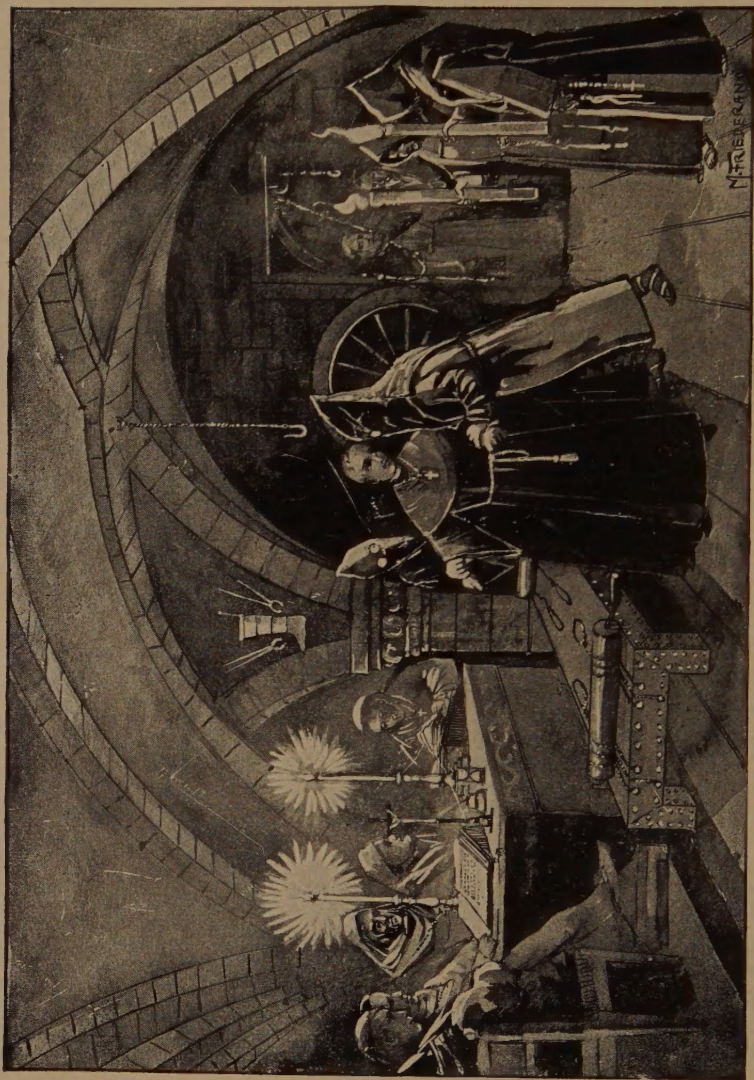
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"YOU DO NOT NEED TO USE FORCE. I WILL MYSELF WALK TO YONDER BED OF PAIN."
Page 139

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FATHER JEROME:

A Story of the Spanish Inquisition.

BY

MRS. HATTIE ARNOLD CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "PRO CHRISTO."

"Man is greater than you thought him;
The bondage of long slumber he will break.
His just and ancient rights he will reclaim:
With Nero and Busiris he will rank
The name of Philip."—SCHILLER.

"Misericordia et Justitia."—*Motto of the Inquisition.*

"With the King or the Inquisition
Hush! Hush."—*Spanish Proverb.*

NEW YORK:
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

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*This Page
of Gratitude and Affection
is inscribed*

To an Honored and Beloved Friend,
*whose counsel and sympathy have for
many years been a source
of joy and strength.*

WORCHESTER, MASS., *March, 1899.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

The author begs to acknowledge the following sources of information or suggestion:

- "History of Philip II. of Spain." Prescott.
- "History of Ferdinand and Isabella." Prescott.
- "Royal Favor."
- "Wild Spain." Profs. Chapman and Buck.
- "The Spanish Brothers."
- "Spanish Legends." Middlemore.
- "Old Court Life in Spain." Elliott.
- "The Martyrs of Spain." Charles.
- "History of Spain." Harrison.
- "The Schools of the Jesuits." Quick.
- "Encyclopædia Britannica."

TO THE READER.

THE cruelty and treachery which characterized Spain's relations with her American colonies have led us to examine her past history.

The following pages deal with the reformation in Spain in the sixteenth century and with that terrible engine of destruction, the Spanish Inquisition. Everything here related of the noble band of men and women who were martyred for their faith is strictly true.

Fanaticism armed with power is the mortal foe of liberty. The vestures of the Christian church in all ages have been dyed with the blood of its "heretics." God has written his condemnation on the pages of history.

Spain's political decadence was largely due to her censorship of the press and to the Inquisition. She has never recovered from the moral and intellectual marasmus into which she sank during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The fires of

St. Dominic finally reverted upon the Spanish oppressors themselves, and their fanaticism ate like a canker into the heart of the monarchy, until only a semblance of life remained in the body of what was once the proud "Mistress of the World."

"Speak, History ! Who are life's victors ?

Unroll thy long annals and say,

Are they those whom the world called the victors—

Who won the success of a day ?

The martyrs, or Philip ? The Spartans,

Who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,

Or the Persians and Xerxes ? His judges,

Or Socrates ? Pilate, or Christ ?"

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FATHER JEROME:

A STORY OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION.

CHAPTER I.

AROUND A POSADA FIRE.

IN the Spanish province of Aragon, about the year 1558, there stood in the ancient university town of Saragossa a *posada* or inn, called the Santa Isabel. This building was more than one hundred years old, having been erected previous to the reign of "Isabella the Catholic." There was a legend which stated that this royal maiden, while on her way to Valladolid to espouse Ferdinand, remained overnight at the Santa Isabel, disguised as a peasant girl, that she might escape from her mortal enemy, Villena, and his spies.

Be this as it may, no one disputed the fact that the *posada* had reached a green old age. It was a long, low, rambling structure with huge chimneys, in some of which whole colonies of swallows

nested every spring, and reared an innumerable progeny.

The old *posada* revelled in gable-ends and balconies; its floors were worn and uneven; the walls and ceilings were blackened by time's long usage. The windows were numerous but primitive, being merely slits in the wall, glazed over so as to admit the light. The wide porch over the doorway was grotesquely ornamented with a rude carving of the Virgin and her child. Every evening in this hospitable inn might be found representatives of all classes and conditions of society, from the muleteer and goatherd returning from the mountain side, to the parish padre or the wealthy hidalgo.

It was a dark rainy night. A dull leaden sky hung threateningly over the town of Saragossa. The waters of the Ebro rose higher and higher as if seeking to overflow their banks. The trees, which had just begun to show opening buds, bent pitifully before the spring gale. A sudden and more terrific blast howled down the chimneys and shook all the windows of the Santa Isabel with dismal force, and the opening of the outer door revealed the fact that the biting breath of old Boreas came direct from the snow-covered Pyrenees.

"God be with you, señors!" said the newcomer, a man with swarthy bronzed face, and clad in the Andalusian costume.

"The saints preserve us! It is Juan Garcia him-

self, and not his ghost !” replied the genial landlord, Antonio Payro, as he met the stranger with outstretched hands.

“ It is a rough night, comrade. I did not expect to see you this spring, we have had such severe gales.”

“ Why, Antonio, did you suppose I would miss the celebration of the festival of Our Lady of Saragossa ? A little bad weather makes no difference to Juan Garcia. The prayers of those who commemorate the feast of the Cathedral del Pilar are rewarded by special favors and graces. If I would remain a successful silversmith, I must not fail to greet Our Lady at the time and place consecrated to this purpose. What comfortable quarters you have here, Antonio,” he added, as he approached the blazing fire to warm his chilled fingers.

The scene was picturesque. The room which Juan had entered was long and narrow, the only light proceeding from a huge fireplace at the farther end. Over the pile of crackling logs a large caldron was suspended by a long chain. The fragrant odor of the steaming *olla* or soup appealed agreeably to the senses. Around the wide chimney were ranged settles, on which lounged half a dozen peasants, engaged in telling ghost-stories. At the opposite end of the room, which was in darkness, could be heard the stepping of hoofs and the tinkling of bells, revealing the fact that the pack-

mules were enjoying the hospitality of the Santa Isabel on an equal footing with their masters.

After Juan had been refreshed with the *olla*, bread and wine, he lighted a fragrant *brevia* and joined the group by the fire.

"What is the good word from Seville, señor?" asked one of the muleteers. "News is slow in reaching us at Saragossa."

"Perhaps you may not have heard," replied Juan, "that his majesty, the great Carlos, has finally abdicated the throne, and has entered the cloister of St. Just to pass the remainder of his days. He desires to put a little space of religious contemplation between the active portion of his life and the grave. He was led to this decision by the appearance of a new comet."

"Ay de mí!" replied one of the peasants. "Methinks we shall see dark days when his son Felipe Segundo returns to Spain and ascends the throne. I wonder how his majesty enjoys the Jeronymite monks."

"We hear that the emperor has suddenly become extremely devout, and his care for his own soul leads him to exercise great vigilance as to the spiritual concerns of the holy brethren. He has for some time observed that the younger monks spent more time conversing with the women who called at the convent gate on business than was seemly, and he has procured an order that any woman

who approaches within two bow-shots of the gate shall receive one hundred lashes."

A loud laugh from the peasants greeted this piece of information.

"It is a great pity," said the landlord, "that such an order could not be applied to Felipe Segundo. Reports tell us that his conduct in Brussels is scandalous. Disguised as a civilian, and in company with profligate young noblemen, he hesitates not to roam the streets at night and insult unprotected women. A hundred lashes would be a good tonic for him."

"You are right, Antonio," said a goatherd; "but you must remember that the prince comes honestly by wild blood. The great Carlos himself was none too pious in his youth. Santa Maria ! It would be rare sport to see his majesty playing the saint !"

"He cuts a mighty poor figure at the business," replied Juan. "He has, you know, a sensitive musical ear. One day when one of the monks made a discordant sound, the emperor paused in his devotions, and swore roundly like the old campaigner he was and always will be. The story is that the abbot, in a fit of righteous indignation, turned upon him and said, 'Cannot you be contented with having so long turned the world upside down, without coming here to disturb the quiet of a poor convent ?' But the most important piece of news which I carry," continued Juan, throwing away his

brevé and lowering his voice to a whisper, "is that the new Lutheran heresy has again cropped out in Seville."

Antonio hastily crossed himself. "Santa María and San José protect us !" he muttered.

Juan continued: "The writings of Luther have been secretly distributed throughout the provinces, and it is surmised that the arch-heretic has quite a following in Spain. The emperor is greatly concerned about the matter, and has called the attention of the government to the fact. They say that if the accursed thing does not die a natural death, Spain will be visited by another such a time of horror and bloodshed as was witnessed at the expulsion of the Jews."

"The Holy Mother of God protect the church," said one of the muleteers piously, "and deal with all heretics as she did with San Roman fifteen years ago !"

"I don't know anything about your San Roman whom you burned at Valladolid," replied Juan, "but I did know Don Rodrigo Valero whose robe of infamy hangs in the cathedral at Seville, and a nobler or better man never lived."

"He was no Christian, Juan, else the church would not have punished him," replied the landlord.

"Antonio, it was for being too good a Christian that he was punished. Valero was a good man and

constant unto death. Surely a hard thing ! a hard thing ! Let not us who know not what it is to lay down life presume to cast the first stone."

"Holy Mother of Christ ! you are getting to be a heretic yourself, Juan."

"Never ! I swear by all the saints," answered the silversmith indignantly ; "but I have eyes to see and ears to hear, and although Valero may have been mistaken in his ideas of truth, nevertheless he was a good man, and you will say so too when I tell you his story.

"Don Rodrigo Valero was a nobleman, wealthy, chivalrous, and generous. In some way he obtained a copy of the Holy Scriptures, and he felt that he had found a treasure which he wanted every one to possess. He withdrew from society, and began to tell his good news. The Inquisition brought him before their tribunal. His rank and the intercession of noble relatives saved him from all punishment excepting a stern rebuke and a command to keep silence. He obeyed for a time, and refrained from all public speaking or teaching. But not for long. He was a second time brought to trial, and sentenced to imprisonment for life and the perpetual *san benito*. On festival days this nobleman was dragged through the streets clad in his yellow robe of shame. Seventeen years ago this day I saw him driven from his cell to the church of San Salvador. After the sermon by the bishop, his voice was

heard in words which have been ringing in my ears ever since:

“ ‘Poor sinners, confess your sins to Jesus. He alone is our mediator with God. He alone can forgive sins.’

“After this day, Valero was not allowed to leave the monastery at San Lucas. And there, at the age of fifty, he died. His robe of infamy, which was of unusual size, still hangs in the great cathedral at Seville, and the inscription under it reads: ‘Rodrigo Valero, a citizen of Seville, an apostate and a false prophet, who pretended to be sent from God.’ Those poor lips are now mute, Antonio, but methinks they kindled a fire in Spain which is burning to-day. I am no scholar and know nothing of the Scriptures, but it has always seemed to me that the words Valero spoke were good words.”

“It is not for us to judge of such things,” said Antonio. “The priests have assured us that Valero and San Roman were both taught by the devil himself, as was Luther. We must not pretend to form any opinions which are not sanctioned by them. It is a dangerous thing for us to differ from our spiritual fathers. And this reminds me of another matter. Hast ever heard of the new order of monks which has been recently organized? No? Then mark my words, Juan. The whole world will one day ring with the deeds of this ‘Company of Jesus,’ as the new society is called.

Our countryman, Ignatius Loyola, was the founder of the order, and is at present general of the company at Rome. Quite a number of schools and colleges have already been started by the Jesuits in Spain."

"It strikes me," said Juan discontentedly, "that we have sacred orders enough. Santa Maria! It takes about all a man can earn now to meet the demands of these holy fathers."

"What say you, comrade, to a society which owns the souls and bodies of its members; which can send men to the ends of the earth as missionaries or spies, and when one set of soldiers dies, can immediately recruit the required number to take their places?"

"Hush, Antonio! you are speaking too loudly," said his friend. "If what you say is true, and some of these Jesuits reside in your vicinity, it behooves us to speak less and think more. I wish that you had told me this earlier in the evening."

"Things have reached a pretty pass in Aragon, if one friend cannot speak his mind to another friend in the privacy of his own home," said Antonio with rising temper.

"*Pax vobiscum*, my children!" said a deep voice close at hand.

The men around the *posada* fire started to their feet in fright at the unexpected sound. A tall figure stood before them, clad in a long robe and a close-

fitting black cap, the uniform worn by the Jesuit priests.

The face which the glare of the fire brought out in bold relief was a striking one. The expression was as haughty as that of any feudal count or baron. The noble forehead indicated great intellectual power. The sunken eyes were dark and piercing. The monk looked like one born to command.

"Peace be with you," repeated the Jesuit, advancing to the fire. "It is a wild night."

Antonio, having recovered from his fright, now advanced.

"Welcome, Señor Padre, to my humble abode. How may I best serve your reverence?"

"By giving me without delay a safe horse, which will take me to the university as speedily as possible. The diligence broke down and will be unable to proceed any farther."

While the landlord despatched his servant to do his bidding, the padre scanned the group of peasants with keen eyes. Then he said in ironical tones:

"My children, you had better reserve your judgments of San Roman and Rodrigo Valero until you are better acquainted with the facts of their lives and their crimes. Surely they both had done vastly better for themselves, and for their posterity, and above all for the church, by silence and a holy life, than by proclaiming doctrines which unsettled the minds of others, and brought them nothing but

ignominy and death. When our holy church issues a command, the individual must give way."

Raising his hand in benediction, the Jesuit left the room as noiselessly as he entered. Soon the sound of a horse briskly trotting down the road announced his departure.

"Who was it?" inquired Juan as he looked at Antonio's blanched face.

"Santo Cristo, my friend! I am undone! That man was none other than Señor Francis Borgia, commissary general of Spain for the Society of Jesus."

CHAPTER II.

THE FESTIVAL OF "OUR LADY."

A PERFECT spring day inaugurated the feast of "Our Lady of Saragossa." The sun shone from a cloudless sky. His rays fell upon the rugged pine-clad sierras of Montcayo and La Virgen, and tipped the snow-capped Pyrenees with roseate light. They made beautiful an old road, which wound with many a curve and bend over numerous *vegas* or plains resplendent in rose and lilac tints, and carpeted with green.

This road crept up a steep mountain slope, now on the verge of a deep precipice, now through groves of stone pines and birches embedded in clumps of pampas grass; now over rocky wastes where vegetation was scanty, then amid sheltered valleys, where the Spanish gorse was ablaze with golden bloom, and the shy arbutus sent forth its delicate flowers; then again the old road ran parallel with salmon rivers or rushing mountain brooks abounding with trout.

Along this ancient Roman highway pressed a motley throng of pilgrims of all ages and social conditions, from the muleteers, charcoal-burners,

vine-dressers, and beggars, to princes, wealthy hidalgos, and knightly caballeros. Representatives were there, in large numbers, from the various convents and cloisters. Dominican, Franciscan, Jesuit, Cistercian, and Jeronymite monks marched in pairs, with stately tread, while devout nuns were present from Santa Clara, San Belen, St. Catherine, and Santa Isabel de los Angeles.

Some of the pilgrims rode donkeys, and occasionally a horse was to be seen, but by far the larger part were on foot. The day was far advanced when the procession marched through the streets of the city of Saragossa,—past the palaces of the nobility, the ruins of the Moorish citadel, the churches of San Pablo and San Felipe,—then at the foot of a steep ascent the goal was before them: the Cathedral del Pilar, as it is called.

The legend of the cathedral was this: It was claimed that in the year 40 A.D. the Virgin alighted on the pillar of jasper, and manifested herself to Santiago when he passed through Saragossa. This event was so strongly attested that the primate of Spain threatened to excommunicate all who even questioned it. Many miracles were yearly reported to have been wrought before the pillar, and the image of the virgin which came down from heaven.

Late in the afternoon, a nun walked over the old Roman road, barefooted and alone. She was clad in a coarse gray gown, black bonnet and veil, which

proclaimed her residence in the convent of St. Catherine. It was the worn, haggard face of a woman past the meridian of life which her fellow pilgrims saw, as they looked compassionately at the wasted figure and bleeding feet of the lonely devotee. "Some vow is upon this holy woman," they said, as they saw her kneel at the wayside shrine and diligently repeat her prayers.

Again and again kind assistance was proffered her, by those who marked her tottering steps and feeble condition, which she rejected with a shake of the head and a wan smile. On and up the steep mountain-side plodded the weary nun. Her cheek grew ashen. She clutched her rosary tighter in her hand, and muttered a prayer. Her face looked very old, with its tense expression of physical exhaustion, and the record of pain, remorse, and disappointment which was traced in unmistakable lines on cheek and brow. She stopped to rest a moment, then rose and pressed on again. Then she uttered a despairing cry: "Blessed Mother of God, must my vow remain unfulfilled when the end is almost in sight?" Then she reeled and fell unconscious to the ground.

The next pilgrims to pass this way were an elderly man with a dignified bearing and kind face, and a maiden of some eighteen years. The young girl was exceedingly fair to look upon. Her golden hair and large blue eyes betrayed a Flem-

ish ancestor. Her features were as delicately chiselled as a cameo. It was a face which would have realized an artist's dream of the Madonna, so sweet and pure was its expression. This was Doña Irene, only daughter of Dr. Leon Sebastian of Valladolid.

The maiden was the first to notice the prostrate figure of the nun.

"Look, father!" she cried. "Some poor sister has fainted or dropped dead from exhaustion."

Hurriedly dismounting, Doña Irene hastened to the nun's side. Dr. Sebastian poured some wine through the closed lips, while his daughter took a cup and filled it from a mountain brook, and, removing the ugly head-gear, tenderly laved the cheeks and brow of the stricken woman. All efforts to restore consciousness failed. The doctor glanced at the setting sun with anxious eyes.

"My child, I like not to leave you on this mountain slope after the dews begin to fall. You have been none too strong since your mother's illness. Had it not been her last command, I should have insisted on your remaining at home. For myself, I have little faith that a visit to this celebrated shrine will heal our poor Carlos." The doctor sighed. His wife, the gracious Doña Christina, whom he had wooed and won in the Netherlands, had been dead only a few months, and he had at home a crippled son, for whose sake this long jour-

ney had been undertaken. The lamented Doña Christina had begged him with her dying breath to try this last resort for the idol of her heart.

"Do not worry about me, father," replied Doña Irene. "I do not think I shall take cold. Of course we could not go on and leave the blessed sister like this," answering the unspoken question which hovered on her parent's lips. "Can we not place her on my horse? I can easily walk the remaining distance. See! the spires of Saragossa are in sight!"

"I shall not allow you to walk a single step," said the doctor decidedly. "You are here against my better judgment, but at least you shall not be killed outright by your rashness. Should you be afraid to remain here for a short time while I go for assistance?"

"Oh no, father! I am sure nothing would harm me while I am caring for this holy woman. Perhaps a great blessing will attend such service."

"If she rouses, give her some more wine and the remains of our luncheon. I presume her faint is due to long-continued fasting. I will hasten to the nearest inn." Wrapping his cape tenderly about his daughter, the doctor mounted the horse and rode quickly away.

A feeling of loneliness crept over the girl as the sun finally dropped behind the glowing Sierras. The keen mountain air made her shiver. Just

then the figure of a young man appeared on the highway. With swift feet he approached Doña Irene. The girl's first feeling was one of alarm, but this changed to glad relief when she saw the youth's face and marked his courteous bearing. It was an interesting face, yet one which it was difficult to understand. Its expression denoted both strength and weakness. Here were to be found regular features, a classical forehead, clear olive complexion, and a sensitive mouth. The beautiful dark eyes were eloquent with repressed longing. It was the face of one who could not pass through life without suffering keenly. Long vigils of study and meditation had deeply furrowed the broad brow, and chased the bloom from his cheek.

Lifting his cap, he said with a winning smile, "Can I be of any assistance, señorita? I perceive that your friend is quite ill."

Before Doña Irene could reply, the nun suddenly opened her eyes and struggled to rise. With a wild look she exclaimed, "Whose voice was that? Rodrigo, Manuel, have you come to reproach me?" Then fastening her eyes on the young man, she continued more calmly: "Is your name Rodrigo Valero?"

"No, madre. My name is Jerome Ortiz."

"Were you not born in Seville?"

"No, my relatives lived in the province of Aragon, but they are all dead. I am an orphan."

"Of course you are right, and I am mistaken. But your eyes looked for all the world like those of Doña Dolores. Still they took an oath upon the crucifix that the child was dead. Your face, señor, reminded me of two brothers, one of whom has long been dead to the world, and the other has for many years been a saint in heaven. Yes, I dare to say it now that I am under God's heaven. Though Rodrigo died under the ban of the church, yet I feel that he may belong to the church invisible. God is good. The blessed Mother is merciful. My prayers and penances will avail. O for strength, that I may arise and fulfil my vow!"

The nun's eyes glittered with a feverish light, and excitement lent her strength. She rose to her feet.

"Father is coming," cried Doña Irene in relieved tones, "and he has friends with him. Wait one moment, good sister, and you shall have assistance."

The nun sank back exhausted by her agitation, and Doña Irene fed her with the bread and wine.

"My grateful thanks, señor, for your kind protection of my daughter," said Dr. Sebastian on his arrival. "I did not like to leave her alone, but there was no alternative excepting to desert this poor sister, which would have been monstrous."

"Do not thank me, señor doctor. Indeed it has

been a pleasure for me to serve your daughter in this slight way," replied the young man as he gazed at the sweet face of the maiden with respectful admiration. "I must now depart. My duty calls me to the bedside of a sick peasant in the next hamlet. Adios!" Lifting his cap, the youth passed swiftly down the path.

"Do you know who that young man is?" inquired the doctor of the peasants who had accompanied him.

"He is a licentiate of theology, Jerome Ortiz by name. He will shortly take priest's orders."

The peasants now assisted the nun to a seat on a mule, and one walked on each side of her to support her weak frame. Doña Irene followed on horseback, and in this way the city of Saragossa was soon reached. They halted at the *posada*, the Santa Isabel, where lodgings for the night had been previously obtained. Both the doctor and his daughter urged the sister to accept their hospitality, but she steadily refused.

"Tempt me not, kind friends," she implored. "I am under a solemn vow to go from Seville to the shrine of Our Lady of Saragossa, alone and on foot, and not a morsel of food would I have taken, if my strength had not failed, until my vow was accomplished."

Alighting from the mule, she made the sign of the cross, and with murmured benedictions she

was soon lost in the crowd of pilgrims who filled the streets of the city.

After leaving Doña Irene, Jerome Ortiz pursued his way to the cottage of old Juanita, the charcoal-burner's wife. He read to her a penitential psalm, recited a prayer to Our Lady and to the patron saint San José, then turned his face homewards, taking a shorter cut over the mountain-side. He had gone but a short distance when a piercing cry broke the stillness.

“Help ! Help !”

Hurriedly following the direction from whence the sound came, he soon reached the spot where a group of students from the university stood watching the struggles of a gypsy maiden whom one of their number had evidently surprised and captured. On seeing Jerome, and fearing that he would inform against them, they all turned and ran swiftly away. Don Luis de Menoz alone remained, with his arm around the gypsy's waist.

There was no love lost between Don Luis and Jerome Ortiz. The latter had just won the prize for disputation, which the faculty of the university offered yearly, and Don Luis had failed in the contest. As he was of a mean, jealous disposition, this in itself was enough to make him hate his rival cordially. The sight of Jerome Ortiz at this juncture in his private affairs was exasperating in the extreme.

The girl uttered loud cries, and tried in vain to free herself.

"Help me, kind sir, for the love of God!" she cried in broken Spanish.

"Unhand the maiden, Don Luis," said Jerome sternly. "You are not doing a very manly thing to treat a maid so roughly."

"I will not let her go until she has paid her ransom with those tempting lips," cried Don Luis. "When she has ceased struggling like a caged bird, and given me what she owes me, a kiss, she shall go, and not before. She is nothing but a gypsy maid anyway."

A strong hand was laid on the arm of Don Luis.

"Let this maid go free or it will be the worse for you," said Jerome with indignant eyes.

"Pray mind your own business, Jerome Ortiz, and cease meddling in my affairs. I am but keeping a tryst with this fair young woman. A priest surely has no call to meddle in matters of love," he added insolently.

"Kind sir, believe him not," said the girl, bursting into tears of rage and mortification.

"I may be a priest, Don Luis, but I am also a man," said Jerome. "Take that, young sir, and learn a lesson in knightly behavior." Thus speaking, he dealt the youth a blow which stretched him senseless on the ground.

"Now, señorita, tell me where you are going

and I will escort you. I am sorry that you have been so alarmed."

The gypsy maid fell upon her knees before Jerome Ortiz, and with thanks and prayers she kissed his hand. Rising quickly, she led her companion through the woods for about a mile, to a clearing where a roving band of gypsies had recently encamped. They had located near Saragossa, thinking it a favorable time to tell the fortunes of the pilgrims and sell their wares.

In Spain this mysterious Romany race went by the name of *gitanos*, and they were regarded as a public nuisance. In spite of civil and military power, these horse-thieves, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and tinkers roamed over the country, getting a good living at the expense of the quiet, law-abiding citizens of the towns and cities. The *gitanas* made more money even than their husbands, by telling fortunes, selling charms and love-philtres, and practising the secret arts of what are termed the occult sciences. They were admitted without reserve into the noblest houses in Spain, and haughty señoras and señoritas carefully examined the antique laces, exquisite bric-à-brac, costly fans, and jewelry which they displayed.

When the gypsy maid reached this clearing in the forest, she uttered a loud, piercing bird-call. Instantly a man stepped out from one of the tents and came swiftly toward her. He was a power-

fully built fellow, with a restless, suspicious eye, and the look of a hunted animal.

"Carmen, my daughter, whom have you brought here?" he asked, seizing her hand roughly.

The girl began to talk rapidly in her own dialect. In a moment the expression of displeasure on the gypsy's face changed to one of pleased surprise. He turned to the young man and said with native dignity, "Many thanks, most gracious señor, for your timely assistance. I am afraid my daughter would have fared hard at the hands of those vile Gentiles. Señor, we are called a corrupt and degraded race, but we count one thing of priceless value—the honor of our women. The gypsy chief cannot find words with which to thank the señor for his kindness. Perhaps the time may come when he can render him some assistance. Every one knows me hereabouts. The life of Benito is at your service." Saying which, the man bowed profoundly, and led his daughter toward the tent. Before she passed inside, Carmen turned her glowing face to look once more at her deliverer.

"Adios, señor!" she said in a sweet voice.

"Quede con Dios!" replied the young man with a hasty gesture of farewell.

CHAPTER III.

JULIAN THE LITTLE.

LONG before sunrise the bells of the Cathedral del Pilar summoned the pilgrims to early mass. There was a special blessing attached to this morning celebration, which most of the pilgrims were eager to possess; consequently the church was thronged with worshippers even at this early hour.

The great altar was ablaze with candles. Besides these, each worshipper carried a lighted taper which was deposited before the shrine of Our Lady. The light fell upon burnished walls and richly stained glass windows. The sculptured saints and frescoes of lawgivers and prophets seemed to take on the semblance of life.

From out the solemn stillness, a burst of sound like thunder rolled from the deep-mouthed pipes of the organ. The altar groaned with the weight of the silver church vessels. The choicest brocades and jewels were displayed. The archbishop and his priests were gorgeous in their gold-embroidered robes. The Madonna was arrayed in magni-

ficent garments. Her mantle was spangled with precious stones and her crown and bracelets were of exquisitely chased gold.

A solemn high mass was celebrated, with all the pomp which befitted so great a festival. The archbishop raised the golden pyx, and all the worshippers fell upon their knees in humble adoration. None remained standing but the great prelate of the church and his assistants. Clouds of incense filled the air. The choir responded with a mighty anthem, and the devout almost fancied that they caught strains of celestial music mingled with the earthly songs of triumph and praise.

The mass was ended, and the worshippers deposited their offerings before the shrine; they adored the sacred relics; then they passed outside to drink the water from the famous well of San José.

When all was ended, Dr. Sebastian and his daughter walked slowly back to the Santa Isabel. A wistful look rested on the face of Doña Irene, as though the service had somehow failed to meet her expectations.

“Do you not believe, father, that our prayers and offerings will bring relief to poor Carlos?”

“We will hope so, daughter. At least they can do him no harm.”

In the Plaza, a Dominican monk was engaged in the traffic of indulgences. An eager crowd

pressed around him to hear his words. Dr. Sebastian paused a moment to listen.

"Indulgences," he said, "are the noblest of God's gifts. Come, and I will give you letters properly sealed, by which even the sins that you intend to commit may be pardoned. But more than this! Indulgences avail not only for the living, but for the dead. Listen, nobles, merchants, wives, youths, maidens! Do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss, 'We are suffering horrible torments! A trifling alms would deliver us. You can give and you will not!' At the very instant," continued the monk, "that the money rattles into yonder strong-box," pointing to a chest for the reception of his fees, "the soul of your friend escapes from purgatory and flies straight to heaven. Therefore for your own sins and for those of the dead, Bring! Bring! Bring!" These last words were shouted, and the noise sounded like the bellow of an infuriated bull. A profound impression was made upon the listeners. Gold coins rattled into the strong-box, and hundreds of letters of indulgence were filled out.

Juan Garcia, the silversmith, had watched the proceedings with great interest. Here was a long-wished-for opportunity to purchase peace and pardon. Some sins which he had committed at different periods of his life weighed heavily upon

his conscience. Calling aside one of the monk's assistants, he entered into a brisk conversation with him. The result was that he purchased the coveted letter of indulgence. In a few moments he overtook Dr. Sebastian, with whom he had a slight acquaintance.

"What do you think of yonder traffic, señor doctor?"

"I think it a fraud!" promptly replied the doctor. "The pope's pardons are simply nets to catch silver and gold. Remission of sins and eternal life are not to be purchased with money. I do not wonder that such men as Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and a host of others have arisen to combat such juggling deceptions."

Juan's countenance fell.

"Why, señor doctor, the holy brother said that none but heretics and infidels scoffed at indulgences. You seem to be a good Catholic and yet you distrust them. Pray what is a poor, ignorant man to do?"

"Use his common sense, if he has any," said the doctor. Juan's countenance looked still more dejected. Glancing at his companion's face for the first time, Dr. Sebastian exclaimed, "Is it possible, Señor Garcia, that you have been caught in this foolish net?"

"I am sorry to say that I have, to the extent of twenty ducats. I wish now that my money was

back in my pocket, and this parchment was in the monk's strong-box. By the mass ! that fellow talked very smoothly, and my sins weighed heavily on my conscience."

"Ah, Juan, I thought you were too shrewd to be caught with chaff. You have paid a high price for your pardon. How is that ? The Dominican advertised to sell indulgences for five ducats. You have paid dearly for a worthless piece of paper."

"Well, señor doctor, the monk showed me some common pardons which he sold cheaply. But when I told him what sins weighed heavily on my soul, he said that nothing short of twenty ducats would make the matter right, and I tell you I was glad to purchase peace at that price. Can you read me what the paper says ? I was never much of a scholar and the writing is not overplain."

Dr. Sebastian read aloud as follows: "May our Lord Jesus Christ pity thee, Juan Garcia, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, in virtue of the apostolical power that has been confided in me, absolve thee from all judgments and penalties which thou mayest have incurred; moreover, from all excesses, sins, and crimes that thou mayst have committed, however great and enormous they may be; I remit the penalties that thou shouldst have endured in purgatory. I restore thee anew to participation in the sacraments of the church. I incorporate thee

afresh in the communion of saints, and re-establish thee in the purity and innocence which thou hadst at thy baptism. And if thou shouldst not die for long years, this grace will remain unaltered until thy last hour shall arrive.

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

"Fray Augustino, Commissary, has signed this with his own hand."

"There!" cried Juan in triumph, "are not those brave words? Pardon for past and present offences, and a free permit to heaven when I die. I am close to sixty years of age, and cannot expect to live always. It is well worth twenty ducats to have such assurances from the pope himself. Do you not say so?" he added, scanning the doctor's face with pitiful eagerness.

"Naught will avail thee, my man, but faith and repentance; then say your prayers, pay your dues, and lead an honest life. These things will do more for your salvation than your bit of paper, I'm thinking."

Juan looked disappointed and seemed about to tear the letter of indulgence in pieces, but on second thoughts he folded it and placed it once more in his breast-pocket. "If it does me no good, it certainly cannot do me any harm," he said. "But I wish my faith in its power had not been shaken."

Just then a sweet baritone voice was heard sing-

ing a hymn. A bend in the road concealed the singer from their view, but the words floated to their ears.

“ Vain folly of this darkened age,
This wandering over earth,
To find the peace by some dark sin
Banished our household hearth.

“ O pilgrim, vain each toilsome step :
Vain every weary day !
There is no charm in soil or shrine,
To wash the guilt away.”

The song suddenly ceased. Loud voices were raised at first in a kind of good-natured banter. Then the tones changed to those of anger, and loud threats were heard. Dr. Sebastian had not outgrown a boy's fondness for a fray of any sort or description.

“ There is trouble over yonder,” he remarked to his companions. “ Señor Garcia, if you will remain with my daughter one moment, I will step back and see if I can be of any assistance.”

Drawing a new Toledo blade from its scabbard, the doctor hastened to the scene of action. Several peasants of Moorish extraction were attacking a dwarf. The little muleteer was bravely defending his saddle-bags, which two sleek, gayly caparisoned mules were carrying.

“ No, I will not show you my wares,” the little man was saying. “ You do not wish to buy of me.

Why should I waste my time when I have promised to deliver my goods to a merchant in Seville on a certain day? Begone, like good fellows, and let an unfortunate muleteer alone."

His words made no impression upon the rough peasants, and one of them had his hand on the saddle-bags, when Dr. Sebastian cried in a loud voice, "Hands off, my fine fellow! Any one of you who touches this man's goods shall feel a thrust from my sword." The peasants were awed at the sudden appearance of one so much their superior, and they immediately slunk away.

The little muleteer came forward and bowed profoundly.

"My most grateful thanks, gracious señor, for your help," he said in a dialect which revealed his Castilian origin. Although a dwarf, his appearance was such as to command respect. He had a homely but intelligent face, and his expression was vivacious.

"What is your name?" inquired Dr. Sebastian.

"Julian Hernandez, but men call me oftener Julian el Chico, because I am little, as you see, señor."

"Have you travelled far?"

"I stopped last at Cervera," said the muleteer evasively. "I am on my way to Seville, to deliver my goods to a merchant there, Juan de Espaya by name. I am seeking a good inn in which to get a

meal for myself and for my faithful companions," pointing to the heavily laden mules which were quietly grazing by the roadside.

"Then come with me to the Santa Isabel," said the doctor. "It is only a short distance from here."

The little party soon reached the hospitable inn. The muleteer insisted on caring for his mules himself. "No one has ever touched them but me," he said by way of apology.

There was quite a stir in the pleasant hostery. Not only was there an unusual number of guests, but the presence of several gypsies added considerably to the interest. Benito, the gypsy chief, was pushing a horse trade with great energy and shrewdness. His wife, a gaudily attired middle-aged gitana, was plying her trade of fortune-telling. Assisting her was her beautiful daughter Carmen.

When the genial landlord, Antonio, found a leisure moment he took a mandolin from the wall and began strumming an accompaniment.

"Come, gypsy maid," he said, "show the Spanish ladies how to dance."

Nothing loath to exhibit her lissom figure to the best advantage, Carmen stepped to the end of the room and adjusted her castanets. Then she caught the hem of her scarlet dress with one hand, and raised the other high over her head. Slowly

she began to lilt in solemn, measured tread. As the music quickened, the motions of her graceful figure were accelerated. Soon the gypsy was swaying, bending, turning, in all the wonderful intricacies of the Spanish tarantella. The face of the girl glowed with excitement. Her eyes shone like stars, and no one present but felt a kind of fascination as the slender figure swept madly on to the quick measure of the mandolin. The climax in the dance approached. The music grew quicker and quicker. The supple pirouetting figure moved so swiftly that the eye could hardly follow the movements. Suddenly the music changed to a slow, wild cadenza, a passionate appealing melody, and the motions of the beautiful gypsy through the stately minuet were none the less irresistible.

A burst of applause greeted the performance.

"Wonderful! Exquisite!" was heard on all sides. The mother made haste to pass her box around, and many a gold coin was dropped therein by admiring spectators.

Dr. Sebastian did not approve of the dancing. That beautiful swaying figure somehow looked evil. Instinctively his eyes sought his daughter's face. When he saw her absorbed fascinated gaze, he rose quietly and led her from the room.

"Why do we go, father?" she inquired. "It was so bewitching! It made me dream of palaces and gardens and Moorish knights and ladies."

"I do not like to have the pure eyes of my little daughter rest on such scenes," answered her father. "Insensibly they poison the mind and heart. I think we can find some better way to amuse ourselves, the short time that we remain here."

"Oh, father, call in that dwarf, and bid him sing for us."

"That is a good idea, daughter. I would not be surprised if we should find him quite entertaining. I will order some wine and we will treat the little man as if he were a prince."

The muleteer was surprised at the unexpected honor, but he gladly complied with Dr. Sebastian's request. Both the doctor and his daughter were impressed with the easy courtly manner and respectful yet dignified address of the man. He seemed to be fitted, by nature and acquirement, to fill a higher station than that of the Spanish *arriero*.

"You are something of a traveller, I imagine," said the doctor. "Tell us about the places you have visited."

"In good sooth I am a traveller, señor, but two or three beaten paths are about the extent of my wanderings. I know the way well from Paris across the Pyrenees; also over the Alps to Geneva. I have once or twice been into the Netherlands."

"Tell us, please," interrupted Doña Irene,

"where you learned that beautiful song which we heard you singing this morning."

"What song was it, señorita? I sing so many that I do not remember which one you mean."

"It was that one which says:

"There is no charm in soil or shrine
To wash the guilt away."

The face of the muleteer lighted up with a bright smile which made his homely countenance for the time being attractive.

"I will gladly tell you the history of those words, señorita, for they brought me the most precious possession of my life.

"A number of years ago I made a trip into Switzerland, and happened in the vicinity of Einsiedeln at the time when the yearly pilgrimage to that famous monastery was made. Over the doors of the convent, in golden letters, were some words in Latin. I asked a pilgrim the meaning of the words. He said they meant, 'Here is full absolution from the guilt and punishment of all sins.' 'That is good news,' I said. 'I am glad I came here. I will go in and hear what the preacher has to say about the matter.' When I entered the chapel, a young man was in the pulpit. He preached from a part of the Apostles' Creed which says, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' He went on to declare that Christ is our only salva-

tion. He boldly proclaimed to all that remission of sins and everlasting life are not to be sought of the Virgin, but of Christ; that absolution, pilgrimages, vows, and presents made to the saints have no value; that God's grace and help are everywhere within reach; that not Mary, but Christ, is our only salvation. Then he paused and sang those words which you heard me sing:

“ ‘There is no charm in soil or shrine
To wash the guilt away.’ ”

“The pilgrims heard this good word with joy. ‘People need no longer go to Einsiedeln,’ they said, ‘for the forgiveness of sins. God gives it to all those who sincerely ask for it, through Christ, and without money.’ ”

The dwarf leaned forward and looked earnestly and longingly into the faces of his listeners.

“Señor, señorita, there is no need for pilgrims to attend the feast of Our Lady at Saragossa for the forgiveness of sins. Christ alone saves, and saves freely. Christ is everywhere. ‘The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.’ Ah, señor, do you know the precious words of Christ? Are you hungry? Christ says, ‘I am the Bread of Life.’ Are you thirsty? Christ says, ‘Unto him who is athirst will I give of the fountain of the water of life freely.’ Are you tired? Christ says, ‘Come unto me and I will give you rest.’ Are you

lost ? Christ says, ' I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' ”

Dr. Sebastian looked at this wonderful muleteer in astonishment.

Most men of his class were ignorant, profane, and vicious. Here was one who, though not educated, had a fund of wisdom, an easy, self-assured deportment, which could only come through association with refined and intellectual people.

“ Man, your learning amazes me ! ” he said at length. “ I think you must be quoting from the Holy Scriptures. Can you read Latin ? ”

“ No, señor.”

“ Then how came you to gain such a knowledge of the Scriptures as you seem to possess ? ”

Julian looked thoughtful. Then raising his clear eyes to the doctor's face, he said, “ Señor, I will tell you a secret if you will give me your word of honor that you will not betray me.”

“ Your wish is granted. If you prefer, I will swear secrecy on the crucifix.”

“ Your word is sufficient, señor. The señorita has the face of an angel. She surely would not betray the little dwarf to his death.”

“ Never ! ” cried Doña Irene.

“ Then I will tell you the simple truth. I have dared to read the words of the blessed Lord Jesus in the Castilian language. Señor, señorita, my life is in your hands.”

CHAPTER IV.

A FAITHFUL WITNESS.

"ARE you then a heretic?" inquired Dr. Sebastian.

Doña Irene drew herself away from the dwarf with a look of horror in her eyes.

"Fear not, señorita!" replied Julian with a merry laugh. "I do not wear horns or carry a cloven foot. A heretic did you say, señor? That depends altogether on what you mean by that word. I hold the same opinions as the great archbishop of Seville, the noble Fray Constantino Fuente."

"He is not a heretic," answered the doctor, "although I have heard that his writings have been carefully examined by the Holy Tribunal. Nothing was found, however, but what was perfectly orthodox."

"You are right, señor. Fray Constantino narrowly escaped being branded as a heretic, and even now his words are watched. But after all, we do not care so much for his words, even though the greatest lords and ladies of Spain flock every week

to the cathedral when it is known that he will officiate at mass. What we want most of all is to know God's words, and these are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures."

"The Scriptures," replied the doctor, "are good and useful when in the hands of scholars who know how to rightly interpret them. From their misinterpretation, all sorts of heresies have arisen. Hence it is of the utmost importance that they be kept from the common people, or reverence for them would soon be destroyed. It sometimes seems as though Satan himself stirred up the hearts of the people and made them clamor for the Scriptures."

"Pardon me, señor, for presuming to differ from you. It is not the devil which stirs the hearts of the people, but God's Spirit. When men and women are hungry, can you blame them for crying out for bread?"

"But heretics put their own construction upon sacred things. The inquisitors do well to exercise the greatest caution in the matter."

"Señor, you are a scholar. It would be very easy for you to find out for yourself whether the charges made by the inquisitors are true. For myself, I have read the words of Christ in my own language, and nothing can ever deprive me of the joy and peace which they afford me. I would that the señor and the señorita knew the same joy."

"Father, can we not read the words of Christ together?" said Doña Irene eagerly.

"Perhaps so," replied Dr. Sebastian. "If I could obtain a copy of the Scriptures without exciting suspicion, I would read it. Can you procure me a copy, Julian?"

"Señor, the saddle-bags which my mules carry are full of copies of the New Testament, which I am bringing to Seville for distribution. I have a few small wares in the top of the bags, which I exhibit when sorely pressed. If you will both excuse me one moment, I will provide each of you with a copy."

The muleteer left the room, but returned directly.

"This translation," he said, "is by Dr. Juan Perez. I have sometimes another translation by Dr. Francisco Enzinas, and both translations are printed abroad." Handing the doctor and his daughter each a copy, he said earnestly, "May the Lord guide you into all truth."

"Do you know, my man, that you are playing a very dangerous game?"

"I know all, señor."

"Do you realize that by offering this book to me you lay yourself liable to all the horrors of the Inquisition?"

"I have counted the cost, señor, and I am not afraid." The dwarf returned the doctor's gaze with undaunted eyes.

“ You are a brave man, Julian Hernandez. Your life is safe in our hands, but pray be cautious and do not exhibit your wares to every one who talks smoothly.”

“ I do not mean to be rash, or to act unadvisedly, but I shall testify for my Master whenever a good opportunity presents itself. I know that sooner or later I shall be discovered and punished. But so long as my Lord needs me, he will take care of me. When my work is done I shall be only too glad to be called home.”

“ Julian, why do you throw away your life needlessly ? It is the dearest possession a man has.”

“ Nay, señor, not half so dear to me as the love I bear to Christ my Lord. He died that I might be forgiven and saved from death. Shall I not be willing to do something for his sake, who endured so much for me ? Señor, pardon me if I ask you to pray that God’s Spirit may lead you aright. I am anxious that your soul and that of your sweet daughter may be saved. Have I not earned the right to entreat you to read carefully the precious words of Christ, when it is at the risk of my life that I have brought his words to you ? Therefore pardon me for my boldness, and do not be offended at my plain speech.”

Dr. Sebastian’s eyes filled with tears, and, touched by the heroism of the little muleteer, he reached forward and grasped his hand.

"I admire your courage, Julian, and appreciate what you are doing for me. May Our Lady and the saints preserve you from harm! Take a glass of wine with us before you go." He poured the fragrant beverage into three cups, one of which he handed to the dwarf.

"Thanks, noble señor, for this honor. May the Lord himself give you and the señorita the riches of his grace!" Then touching the wine with his lips, he placed the cup upon the table. With a profound bow and an "Adios, señor! adios, señorita!" he left the room.

Long after Doña Irene was asleep, her father sat reading, by the dim light of a candle, from the book which had come into his possession. His heart was prepared for the seed of divine truth. For many years he had rebelled secretly against the penances, pilgrimages, and other ceremonies, the strict observance of which the church had imposed upon her followers. The slothful, sensual lives of many of the monks and high church officials had disgusted him. His soul was starving on the husks with which it had been fed. He truly longed for the bread of life. Much that he now read for the first time was unintelligible to him, but there was one passage which shed a ray of sunlight into his darkened soul: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

He closed the book and retired for the night. It seemed to him as if the simple reading of the words had lifted a weight from his heart, and he felt that the dawn of a new life was near.

The next morning he inquired diligently of Juan Garcia for the little muleteer.

"He was off long before sunrise, señor doctor," was the reply. "A smarter man for his size I have never seen. He told me some good words about Christ, and how he forgives sins without money. He says there is no need for the Lady Mother to intercede for us; because the Son is not only willing but anxious to forgive and save us. And what do you suppose I have done, señor doctor? I took that letter of indulgence and tore it into strips. If it be true that Christ is willing to forgive me, I have no need of Fray Augustino's letter."

"You have done well, Juan," replied Dr. Sebastian; "but I am very sorry not to have seen Julian Hernandez once more."

While the doctor was superintending the preparations for departure, the gypsy's wife and daughter came to Doña Irene.

"Let me tell your fortune, beautiful señorita," said the old gitana.

Doña Irene stretched out her small white hand.

The gypsy studied its lines for a few moments, and then shook her head. "Gracious señorita," she said at length, "I see thick darkness and hear

strange, awful cries and groans. But the saints be praised ! a bright star illumines the gloom. Although there are troublous times before you, the sun shines at last, and all is peace and happiness. The prince comes in good time, and bears his lady-love to fairer climes."

Doña Irene laughed a gay, careless laugh.

The gypsy maid eyed the beautiful Spaniard with interested eyes. As Doña Irene became aware of this intent gaze, a sudden impulse came to her. She took the cluster of roses from her belt and handed them to this daughter of the forest with a sweet smile.

Carmen looked pleased, and bending down she kissed the hand which had bestowed the favor. "The gypsy never forgets a kindness, gracious señorita," she said in broken Spanish.

During the long wearisome journey home, Dr. Sebastian was unusually thoughtful. His daughter glanced into his face often, and was struck with the look of calm contentment, so different from the sad, unsatisfied expression which it had worn for many months.

"Daughter," he said, "I think we have a better gift to carry poor Carlos than health. A healed soul is of infinitely more value than a healed body."

CHAPTER V.

THE LETTER.

"To the Reverend Ignatius Loyola, General of the Company of Jesus, at Rome.

"ESTEEMED AND ILLUSTRIOUS FATHER IN GOD: I write this letter from the university of Saragossa, to inform you that one of the commissions laid upon me by your reverence has been completed. The youth Jerome Ortiz, who was placed under my care, has now been consecrated as a priest, and is stationed at our House in Valladolid, under Father Padilla.

"Jerome was under the canonical age, and properly should not have taken priest's orders for another year. There were urgent reasons, however, which led me to hasten this step. Lutheran heresy has been discovered in several parts of the Spanish kingdom. Before this youth had any opportunity of becoming contaminated with this evil, I made sure that he was bound to our Holy Church by the most sacred oaths of fealty.

"Perhaps it would be well to refresh your memory in regard to this youth's antecedents. The father of Jerome Ortiz was the Don Manuel Valero,

brother of that noted apostate Rodrigo Valero, who was excommunicated from the church, and died under her ban. Don Manuel Valero was denounced on good authority as sharing his brother's opinions, and he mysteriously disappeared. Perhaps you may know what became of him. Perhaps it would not be a difficult matter for me to guess. Be this as it may, the nobleman started for Madrid on business, and never returned. Some said he was waylaid by brigands, and murdered; others claimed that he had committed suicide rather than share the ignominy of his brother's fate. The son, then a child three years old, was taken from his mother, in order that he might be saved for the church. She died a year afterward, presumably a heretic.

"The remaining relatives were a half-brother and a half-sister named de Menoz, and these two inherited the princely fortune of the Valeros. The sister, a most devout woman, gave her portion shortly to the church, and entered the convent of St. Catherine.

"Count Pedro de Menoz desired that the boy should be taken by the church, and educated for the priesthood. He has paid liberally for the boy's education, and has annually given generous donations to the church.

"Jerome was conveyed to a cloister in the north of Spain, and there he remained until his uncle decided to place him in a Jesuit college. Five years

ago he was placed under my tuition, and has been studying at the university of Saragossa. He is a youth of rare promise, with a retentive memory and oratorical gifts of a high order. He has just won the annual prize for debate. He is unquestionably the leading scholar in the university. He is possessed of noble traits of character and a sensitive conscience.

“ He knows nothing about his parentage. Don Pedro de Menoz he believes to be simply his rich benefactor, who, out of pity, took him from poverty and educated him. His history is a secret known only to a few. He does not dream that we are making him a priest of Rome in order to wash the taint of heresy from the name of Valero.

“ I have had him carefully trained in the methods, approved by our Order. He is an ambitious youth, and I have fostered this trait. To excel has ever been his motto. I have known him to steal hours from his sleep in order to do this, and he has succeeded admirably. I have aimed to develop in him the receptive and reproductive faculties of the mind. He has stored his brain with theology and philosophy. He has mastered the Latin language, is skilful in debate, and can recite selections from all the leading poets, ancient and modern. Originality or independent thought and speech we have carefully suppressed. I want him to be like a mirror which faithfully reflects the face looking therein. He needs no judgment or will save those of his

Superior, hence I have not sought to develop them. His spiritual life has kept pace with the intellectual. I have a book wherein all his confessions are duly recorded. He reports to me weekly, and he seems thoroughly well grounded in our most holy faith.

"I had an interview with him recently. He was very anxious to enter the lists as a missionary, but I told him we had other plans for his future, and that he must remain quietly in our House at Valladolid for the present.

"There is one thing about Father Jerome which perplexes me: occasionally a look comes into his face which I do not understand. When I refused his request to become a missionary, a look of passionate, restrained longing came into his eyes, and there were lines of suffering about his mouth. But when I said, 'Is my decision satisfactory to you?' he answered without hesitation, 'Certainly, your reverence.'

"His repose of manner comes largely from the habit of self-control which our discipline requires. I have written Father Padilla to watch the young priest carefully, and to report his progress to me monthly. I leave here for Portugal in a few days.

"Committing you to the care of Jesus and his blessed Mother,

"I have the honor of remaining,

"Your unworthy servant,

"FRANCIS BORGIA."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET MEETING.

"JUST look here, Carlos," said a cheery young voice to Dr. Sebastian's invalid son. "I have with mine own hands plucked the largest and fairest grapes which my uncle's vines bore. I hope they will refresh you. Poor fellow! You look worn out with your suffering."

The speaker was Don Alfonso de Menillo, the nephew of the Count de Menillo, who was a prominent member of the city council and likewise an inquisitor.

Two years ago, when the doctor's son was eighteen, there was not a stronger or more athletic young man in Valladolid. He was fond of all kinds of outdoor sports, and was especially adept in the use of the sword and lance. At this period in the history of Spain, the national sport—the bull-fight—was participated in by *caballeros* of high rank, and many of the *matadors*, instead of being, as now, from the lowest ranks of society, were scions of the noblest houses. Don Carlos had entered the Plaza de Toros, and had already distinguished himself by his courage and bravery. He tempted his

fate once too often. In a contest with a powerful Castilian bull, he was thrown from his horse and gored by the maddened brute. He was carried from the arena as one dead, but he came slowly back to life to find himself a cripple.

Dr. Christobal Losada, from Seville, an intimate friend of Dr. Sebastian, attended the young man, but he considered the case hopeless. As he was one of the leading physicians in Spain, his opinion was deemed final. Dr. Losada, unlike his other professional brethren, dared to use his own judgment, and he had even adopted habits of independent research very unusual in a Spaniard. He was comparatively free from prejudice, and he quite often hazarded remedies which were not altogether "cosas de España" (things of Spain). This, in part, accounted for his success.

From the moment that this eminent physician gave his verdict, Don Carlos sank into a morose, irritable invalid, a torment to himself and a grief to those who loved him devotedly.

The room in which he lay was the pleasantest one in the house. The walls were hung with choice pictures by Titian. The couch was luxuriously furnished. A fireplace had been added to the room at considerable expense. A table covered with books and writing materials was placed within easy reach of the invalid. From the windows, two of which faced the south, a fine view delighted the

eye. Beyond the narrow court with its fountain were beautiful *vegas*, bright with many-hued flowers, the flashing river, and the amphitheatre of snowy-crested sierras in the background.

"Thanks, my Alfonso!" said Don Carlos with a brighter look on his face. "It is indeed kind of you to visit such a melancholy fellow as myself. Sit down and tell me the news."

Ursula, the housekeeper, seeing that her charge no longer required her presence, left the room.

"When did you return from the university?"

"Last night. And what do you think, Carlos? My most intimate friend, Jerome Ortiz, has been stationed at the House of the Jesuits; so I shall be able to see him occasionally. He is a noble fellow. I know you would admire him. How should you like to have me bring him to see you some day?"

"Never!" cried Carlos, a spot of red showing on either sunken cheek. "Never with my knowledge shall another priest visit me. Holy Mother! how they have pestered me with their pious cant! Do not bring your friend here if he is a priest."

"Very well. It shall be as you wish," replied Alfonso in a disappointed voice. "But I know you would like Jerome. He saved my life last term, when I was swimming beyond my depth. I feel that I owe him more than I can repay."

"Let us drop Jerome now, if you please, Alfonso. Do tell me the news."

“As for news, Carlos, of course there is but **one** thing talked of on the streets, and that is King Philip’s great victory at St. Quentin. Although it happened some time ago, people are not tired of rehearsing it. How I wish I had been there. The Constable of France, Montmorency, the Marshal de St. André, and the Admiral Coligny were the leaders on the enemy’s side. The Spanish and Flemish troops were under the command of the Duke of Savoy. They say this signal victory was due to the splendid action of a Flemish nobleman, Count Egmont, who was at the head of the King’s cavalry. The very crown and flower of the chivalry of France were engaged in the battle, and they were completely subdued. I tell you, Carlos, that if this war continues much longer, I shall enlist and fight under King Philip’s banner.”

Like other youths of his time, Alfonso was loyal to his sovereign, without in the least comprehending what a monster Philip the Second was, a monster fit to be ranked with Nero the infamous. He not only sacked but burned the noble city of St. Quentin. At his order, for three days every human being met by the Spaniards was butchered. Many of the women were outraged, were slashed in the faces with knives, or had arms or hands amputated, and naked and maimed were driven into the blazing streets of the city to perish.

The pious king, however, did not forget his duty

to the saints ! He caused the body of St. Quentin to be removed from the cathedral, and had it conveyed to the royal tent, where masses were said before the coffin daily. While the bones of the dead saint were sheltered by the king, outside, dogs were gnawing the dead bodies of the slain Frenchmen, and soldiers were driving into exile the desolate and maimed women.

When Alfonso paused in his praises of King Philip, to take breath, his eye lighted on his companion's face. Seeing the look of bitterness which rested there, he said penitently, "Forgive me, Carlos, I forgot that your ambition was to be a soldier."

"Never mind, Alfonso ! One drop more of gall into my cup makes but little difference. I ought by this time to have become used to being laid on the shelf."

"I shall have to go now, old fellow. My cousin, Doña Consuelo, charged me to do an errand for her before my return, and I am exceedingly anxious to find favor in her beautiful eyes. When do you expect your father and sister ?"

"To-night, if nothing unforeseen happens to prevent. The last three days have seemed like so many years. Mother Ursula was kind, but clumsy. No one attends to my wants like Irene."

"Poor fellow, I hope you will not be disappointed. I shall come again soon. Adios."

The sun was slowly sinking behind the distant hills. The sky glowed like a sea of molten gold. Far to the eastward, the massive pile of San Christobal reflected its gorgeous hues in a soft rosy blush, which mantled its snow-streaked summit. The valleys already lay in cool shadows, when Dr. Sebastian and his daughter rode up to their own door.

The face of the youthful Carlos was radiant with joy as he saw the travellers. An affectionate greeting from them compensated for the lonely hours he had endured, and a look of satisfaction settled over his countenance as Irene performed many loving offices for his comfort.

"And has Our Lady of Saragossa sent me the gift of health, father?" he said with a cynical smile, sad to see on any face.

"My son," said his father, "I have brought you the gift of God, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. To-morrow I will tell you the meaning of these words."

It was in vain, however, that the doctor and Irene tried to share the good news which they had heard with the invalid.

"When God gives me health," he cried in bitterness of spirit, "then I will believe in his goodness and love."

A month later, Dr. Losada made his friend a brief visit. He came partly to see his patient, and

partly to meet Don Carlos de Seso, who was to come to Valladolid about this time.

"How fares it with your son?" he inquired of Dr. Sebastian.

"Carlos is doing wretchedly. He does nothing but kick against the pricks, from morning till night. His bodily strength seems to wane from month to month."

"Poor fellow!" replied Dr. Losada. "Until he stops this useless fretting we can do but little for him."

"If he could only know the One who says, 'Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,' I think he would soon gain a degree of bodily vigor. As it is, despair has seized hold of him."

Dr. Losada looked earnestly at his companion. Then he said, inquiringly:

"You have been reading the Scriptures, and not the Vulgate which the church recommends?"

"I can trust you, Losada," said his friend. "I admit that I have been reading the past month a copy of the Scriptures in the Castilian language. I have found the pearl of great price."

"Your precious treasure is likewise mine," said Dr. Losada.

The two men grasped each other's hands, and their friendship was cemented by ties which death itself could not break. After conversing with his friend and testing his sincerity by a few questions,

Dr. Losada then revealed the fact that there was in Valladolid, as well as in Seville, a little Protestant community, holding Lutheran services regularly every week. He, himself, was the pastor of the infant church in Seville, while in Valladolid the pastors were Fray Augustino Cazalla and Fray Domingo Rojas. The meetings in the capital were held at the house of the former.

“To tell you the exact truth, Sebastian, there is a meeting of Lutherans to-night, at which Don Carlos de Seso will speak. Would you not like to accompany me, and I will introduce you to the brethren.”

Dr. Sebastian gladly consented to go, although he fully realized the danger which attended the act.

After nightfall they repaired to the house of Fray Cazalla. Dr. Sebastian was warmly welcomed by the brethren. He was greatly surprised at the character of the little assembly. He had imagined that by far the larger part of the converts were from the poorer class. What was his surprise to find the purest of “sangre azul” (blue blood) represented here. There was Don Carlos de Seso, an Italian nobleman, and his wife, Isabella de Castilla, princess of the royal houses of Leon and Castile; also Antonio de Herezuelo, a famous advocate, and his beautiful young wife, Leanor; Don Christobal de Padilla, a knight; Doña Ana Rojas, and Doña Beatriz Cazalla, and many others, both men and

women of rank. Quite a number of Beatas, or holy women not bound by conventual rules, were there, as well as several local priests. There was also a sprinkling of servants and tradespeople in the audience. Juan Garcia was among the number. The silversmith had moved to Valladolid, having received quite an important contract from the Regent Joanna, which required his presence in this city.

Dr. Sebastian was much impressed with the noble bearing of Don Carlos de Seso. As Dr. Losada said, "He seemed a combination of the Cid and St. Paul." He brought the good news that the reformed doctrines were spreading rapidly in the north of Spain. At his house, which was the centre for all Protestants in his vicinity, there were plenty of books which were distributed freely, such as Bibles, Testaments, and the writings of Luther, Calvin, and Melancthon, translated into Castilian. The chief officer in the custom-house at Logrono was himself a Protestant, and aided materially in the work of circulating these proscribed books.

After reading of the Scriptures and prayer, which were conducted by Don Carlos, a commotion was heard in the next room. Doña Beatriz Cazalla left the room, but returned a moment later, accompanied by a little muleteer who was staggering beneath the weight of a pack larger than himself.

"Julianillo ! Julianillo !" were the delighted cries heard on all sides. They all pressed around

the dwarf, and shook his hand warmly. His face lighted up when he saw Dr. Sebastian.

"God be thanked, señor," he said. "I need not ask you if you have received the good news. Your presence here tells me that."

The noblemen assisted the dwarf to unload his pack. Fray Cazalla called him "brother," and the Princess Isabella declared that the little muleteer was more of a hero than the Cid Campeador, for he fought enemies greater than himself, and single-handed.

Julian was almost overcome by these proofs of esteem, but he replied with modest dignity.

"Do not praise me overmuch, my brethren. I am far from being courageous. Many a time when I have been in hiding I have held my breath for fear of the custom-house officers. So far, my escape from detection has been miraculous. I am such an inoffensive-looking little fellow that the officers regard me with compassion, and have even offered to help me along with my pack."

The bundle was now uncorded and opened, and besides Bibles and Testaments, there were writings of Luther which had just been translated into the Castilian language. Any one of these books or pamphlets, found in a person's possession, would have been sufficient to send him to the prisons of the Inquisition, nay, even to the Quemadero or Burning-Place.

After the meeting, Dr. Losada introduced Don Carlos to his friend. They had a long talk together on things pertaining to the kingdom of God, then by degrees the story of the invalid son was told. Dr. Losada said, "If Carlos could go to Paris, and remain in the hospital, it is barely possible that he might be benefited. An eminent surgeon there has performed several remarkable cures in cases similar to this one."

"It would be impossible for me to send the boy to Paris just at present," said Dr. Sebastian.

"My friend," replied Don Carlos, "my home lies on the borders of France. It would be a pleasure for me to send your son to Paris, and I will see that he has a trusty escort thither, if you will place him in my care. I feel a deep interest in my unhappy namesake."

"I cannot refuse such a generous offer," replied Dr. Sebastian. "Accept a father's thanks."

So it was decided that the youthful Carlos should return to Logrono with his kind benefactor.

CHAPTER VII.

FATHER PADILLA'S SUSPICIONS.

"INFORM Father Jerome on his return to the house that Count de Menoz desires an audience with him in the library."

"Yes, your reverence."

The Superior of the House of the Jesuits, in Valladolid, was Father Padilla, a middle-aged man with a long thin face, strongly marked features, and eyes in which lurked a sinister expression. The Count de Menoz was in the prime of life, with soldierly bearing and quick energetic movements.

"What are your impressions of Father Jerome?" inquired the Count.

"I am not prepared to answer your question," was the reply. "The young priest has only been with us a short time, you know."

"You are very guarded, to say the least," said the Count impatiently. "Has Jerome given you any cause for complaint? Come, your reverence, that is a direct question and deserves a like answer."

A suggestion of a smile hovered about the shrewd face of the Superior.

"Very well, Count. I have several complaints to enter against Father Jerome. In the first place, he persists in keeping apart from the brethren. Evidently he does not care to fraternize with them. He seeks solitude, and is over-zealous in his observance of fasts and penances. I like not his morbidly sensitive conscience."

"By the mass!" cried the Count, "I have heard superiors before now who complained of the indifference and laxity of the monks under their charge, but never did I hear of a monk who was so zealous and so conscientious as to merit censure."

"Zeal is well enough up to a certain point, Count. Beyond that point it is a superfluous waste of energy. What is the life-rule of our great Ignatius? 'Remarkable shrewdness and little sanctity are better than great sanctity and little shrewdness.' I do not like to see a young monk devouring books, meditating by the hour, keeping nightly vigils, and wasting his substance in eternal fasts and humiliations. This sort of thing cannot be kept up indefinitely. Sooner or later there will be a reaction, and reactions are dangerous."

"Father Jerome is an enthusiast," remarked the Count.

"Exactly. And we have no use for enthusiastic young monks here. General Borgia has filled his head with lofty ideals concerning the priesthood, and with other ascetic notions, which I shall have

to uproot, or the young priest will not amount to anything. Already he has grown gloomy and unapproachable."

"General Borgia wrote me that the youth was unusually gifted, and he prophesied that he would one day fill a high place in the church," said the Count.

"He is talented, I grant you that. If we can graft a little worldly wisdom into his character, together with more coolness and calculation, I shall have hopes of him. He evidently has expected to find great sanctity in the cloister, and he is experiencing a sense of chagrin at finding things otherwise. This is a wholesome lesson for him, and will serve as a corrective if received in a proper spirit. Prayers and penances are good things in their places, but they are not healthful for a steady diet. As one of the great fathers of the church said, 'A man must escape from the mental servitude of the neophyte if he would rise to eminence.'"

"Your reverence," announced one of the monks, "Father Jerome has returned."

"Send him in here at once. If you have no objections, Count, I should like to watch the young priest while he is conversing with you."

"Stay, by all means, Father Padilla. I have nothing of a private character to say to him."

Father Jerome entered the room, and bowing respectfully, stood in silence.

"I am delighted to find you established in the cloister, Father," said the Count, rising and taking the monk's cold passive hand in his own. "You have at last reached the goal of your ambitions. Allow me to present my congratulations."

"Many thanks, Count," replied Father Jerome.

"I am sorry not to have been able to attend either the prize debate, or the ceremony of consecration. I fully planned to witness both, but since Lutheran heresy has been discovered in various sections, my time, together with that of other Inquisitors, has been fully occupied. I think you can be of great service to us in seeking out heresy, and reporting it to headquarters."

"I shall be glad to serve you in any legitimate way, Count," was the prompt reply.

The Superior arched his eyebrows at the word "legitimate," but allowed the conversation to proceed without interruption.

"I hope you will enjoy your life here, Father Jerome, and I beg you to give up so much study and thinking. You really look ill. Try and curb your zeal, or you will lose your health. Remember that I take a great interest in your welfare."

"Many thanks, Count, for your kind wishes. I am certainly grateful to you for all you have done for me. Without your patronage, I could never have gained so liberal an education."

"I am your friend, Father Jerome, and have al-

ways been. Let us not speak of gratitude. Rise to eminence, by the exercise of your talents, and I shall feel more than repaid for my efforts in your behalf. This is all I have to say to you, to-day."

The monk bowed and silently left the room.

"What do you think of him?" inquired the Superior.

"He has certainly changed a great deal since I last saw him. Do find a way to stop his fasts and penances. Poor fellow, he looks wretchedly!"

As Father Jerome passed out into the hall he encountered Father Gregory, the eldest monk in the establishment, and the one who wielded authority over the other monks in the absence of the Superior. He was a great gossip and a mischief-maker as well. He was engaged in entertaining an elderly priest, Father Ambrose by name, who was the cura in the adjoining hamlet. Eager to learn the news, Father Gregory advanced upon the young priest with the words:

"Did the Conde de Menoz have an important message for you? He seemed hardly able to await your arrival."

"Nothing of special importance," replied Father Jerome, who thoroughly disliked his interlocutor.

"Is he going to remain here to dinner?" pursued the inquisitive monk.

"I do not know. Perhaps you had better step into the library and ask him," was the answer, ac-

accompanied by a look of ill-concealed disgust. Bowing, the young priest passed on.

Father Gregory's face darkened. "Insolent beggar!" he said in an undertone. "How does he dare to put on such puppy airs to me? We will humble him one of these fine days."

Rejoining his guest, he said, "Did you notice that young man? He is the latest arrival at the House."

"Indeed, I thought him very distinguished looking," replied Father Ambrose.

"He is very conceited, and entirely lacking in those graces of humility and obedience to superiors which our Father Ignatius enjoins upon his followers."

"Is that so?" returned Father Ambrose timidly. "I thought the young man looked sad and ill."

"He is very exclusive," continued Father Gregory. "He prefers solitude to the society of any of the brethren. He is the protégé of Count de Menoz. There seems to be some mystery about him, which as yet I have not unravelled. They say the Count seeks some high preferment in the church for him. I have even heard a cardinal's hat hinted at. But he will never win that, I am confident. There is something very suspicious about the fellow."

"Is that really so?" was all poor Father Am-

brose could utter, with eyes meekly cast on the ground.

Father Gregory glanced contemptuously at the shabby figure of the old man.

“ You never felt the fires of ambition seething in your veins, did you, brother ? ”

“ Never,” said Father Ambrose. “ By all that is holy, I never had an aspiration beyond the desire of knowing my superior’s will, and then humbly performing it.”

“ Then you will always remain a happy man, and will have the approval of your conscience and the benediction of our Holy Church, which I prophesy is more than can be said of some others,” with an angry look in the direction of Father Jerome.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HELPING HAND.

"YOUR Excellency, Padre Padilla and Padre Ortiz," announced a servant in livery.

The occasion was the fête given by Count de Menoz, to celebrate his son's birthday. The princely mansion was ablaze with the light from hundreds of silver lamps. The rooms were hung with old tapestries, worked in elaborate patterns of gold. From the walls were suspended shields and other trophies of arms. The broad marble stairway was thronged with people, resplendent with jewels and costly apparel.

Count de Menoz greeted the priests with marked cordiality. Don Luis received Father Padilla's smooth congratulations, and Father Jerome's bow, with distant politeness. Both of the young men maintained a hostile silence.

Father Jerome had secretly rebelled against attending the fête, but his Superior had insisted that it was well for him to gain a little knowledge of society.

"It might have been well for me to have done

this before I took my vows, your reverence, but not now, oh not now."

There was a look of dumb entreaty in those mournful eyes, which was not lost on Father Padilla.

"Remember your vow of obedience," replied the Superior sternly. "When I give you strange commands, I have my reasons for doing so, and you have promised faithfully to serve your Superior as the staff in his hands."

The reason for Father Jerome's reluctance was this: ever since his accidental meeting with Doña Irene Sebastian, the sweet, pure face of the young girl was ever present with him. It destroyed his peace of mind. For days before his consecration to the priesthood he underwent the Discipline, and for several nights he knelt on the stones of the chapel in prayer the whole night long. A degree of quietness came into his tortured soul, and he sincerely hoped by faithful, humble submission, by the silent fulfilment of duty, and by incessant prayer, to become a worthy son of the church. Still, knowing his weakness, he dreaded to face temptation.

After greeting his host, the Superior had left his companion to make shift for himself. Father Jerome withdrew to a corner of the room, where he could overlook the festivities, and at the same time attract no attention.

Those who noticed him, bowed respectfully,

giving him the honor due to his position as a priest, but no one spoke with him. His eye roved over the ballroom, where stood many a group worthy of a great painter's brush. Graceful and magnificently dressed ladies moved about the rooms, resting on the arms of jewelled and ruffled *caballeros*. Now and then his eye marked a familiar face. There was Count de Menillo, his son Enrique, and his daughters, Doña Inez and Doña Consuelo. Yes, and just entering the room was his friend Alfonso. Behind him, and leaning on the arm of her father, was Doña Irene Sebastian. A veritable queen of beauty she appeared to him, with those bewitching dimples in her cheeks, and smiling lips curved like a Cupid's bow. With beating pulse, Father Jerome gazed at the lovely girl. Then with a mighty effort at self-control, he turned to leave the room. The man within him pleaded for one more look at the sweet face, but the priest said sternly to himself, "Beware ! beware ! What has a consecrated son of the church to do with thoughts of love ?" He moved swiftly toward the balcony, when a hand touched his shoulder, and the voice of Count de Menoz sounded in his ear.

"One moment, if you please, Father Jerome. I have been desirous for some time of speaking with you concerning my son. It is my privilege to choose a confessor for him, and it is my earnest wish that you serve him in that capacity."

"Impossible, Count !"

"How so ?"

"Of course you cannot be ignorant of the fact that in the university we were far from friendly. In fact, we were open enemies. Your proposal would be exceedingly trying for both of us."

"Nevertheless it is my wish, nay more, my command," replied the Count imperiously. "We will now consider the matter as settled. I perceive that you are not enjoying the festivities of the evening," he added, noting the look of weariness on Father Jerome's face.

"You are right, Count. These gayeties seem like an idle mockery to me. I did not wish to come."

"Tut ! tut ! my boy. You must get over your fits of melancholy. You do not belong to an Order which keeps its followers in cells. The disciples of Loyola mingle freely with men, and enjoy the amenities of life. You must relinquish that ascetic idea of solitude, and be happy."

The Count was called away, and as dancing was about to be inaugurated, Father Jerome proceeded on his way to the balcony. Once more his eyes rested on the brilliant assembly. Don Luis de Menoz was just leading his partner, Doña Irene Sebastian, to the head of the room for the opening number. The priest's eyes blazed at the sight. The young girl seemed conscious of his intense gaze.

A familiar look about the priest's face made her inquire,

"Who is that monk, Don Luis?"

"Father Jerome Ortiz," answered the young man. "Doesn't he look like a skeleton at the feast? Conceited prig! I do not see why father saw fit to invite him this evening. He was a poor lad, whom the Count picked up from the gutter out of charity, and educated. He stares at us as though he thought our innocent gayety a sin."

Doña Irene made no reply. When next she looked for those mournful eyes, they had vanished.

Later in the evening, as Alfonso de Menillo was passing along the balcony, he spied the solitary figure of his friend, with his face buried in his hands.

"Why, Jerome, old fellow, you look downcast. I have been searching for you all the evening. Why do you not improve your freedom from the musty cloister, and enjoy this gorgeous spectacle?"

"This is no place for one dressed as I am," replied the priest, glancing at the black robe of his Order. "I feel strangely out of place. The enjoyments of youth, and I, have nothing in common."

"Are you not happy in your vocation?" inquired Alfonso.

"Happy?" echoed his friend. "I do not know the meaning of the word. Did you ever notice, Alfonso, in your walks into the country, a tract of green turf which the wind has covered with a thick

carpet of decayed autumn leaves ? The grass below is stifled, and dies for want of light and air. I find myself enclosed in such a spot. The buds of promise are stifled beneath withered hopes and empty ambitions. Here I must spend my days, without the slightest prospect of emancipation."

"Pray, then, Jerome, why did you choose the priesthood for a profession ?"

"Alfonso, I did not choose. Others chose for me. Such a pressure was brought to bear upon me from my youth up, that I was powerless to resist. Invisible hands closed the doors of other professions. I was forced to submit to my fate. To-night I have awakened to the fact that it has all been a terrible mistake. I ought to have battled manfully against fate."

"Poor fellow !" said Alfonso sympathetically. "Is it as bad as that ? I see no way out of it, unless you break your vows and leave the country."

"I keep faith ever !" was the proud reply. "No, Alfonso, I allowed myself to drift into the priesthood, and now I shall continue therein and do the best I can. But come and see me often. Your visits will do more to cheer me than you can imagine. Now I must seek Father Padilla. I trust by this time he is ready to depart."

The Superior was closeted with the two Inquisitors, Count de Menoz and Count de Menillo. A decanter and wine-glasses were on a side table, and

the three men were imbibing deep draughts of the choicest vintages of Val de Penas and Xeres.

The Superior filled his glass to the brim, and gazed at the fragrant beverage with the loving eye of a connoisseur. "I am willing to wager, your excellency," he said, addressing his host, "that you will die of a green old age. Domine Dios! This wine is potent enough to carry a man far into a hundred years." He drained the glass, and his companions did likewise.

"Your Excellencies," said Father Padilla, "how does the heresy-hunt progress?"

"Finely," replied Count de Menillo. "We have established a rigid censorship of the press in all the centres of learning, and we have suppressed the Holy Scriptures. We have condemned all Hebrew and Greek Bibles, or Bibles translated into the Spanish language; also, works of devotion and books of hours have been condemned by us, because most of them contained fragments of Scripture. For myself, I never read the Scriptures. I consider the mere desire to read them a symptom of heresy."

"So do I," echoed Count de Menoz. "But you will be surprised to learn, Father Padilla, that in spite of all our efforts, contraband goods have been smuggled into the country. In a ship from Holland, bound for Valencia, were found two casks of Lutheran books which we immediately took to the

Plaza and burned. In the same way, heretic books came from Paris in burgundy and champagne wine-casks. We have placed a strict coast-guard in the provinces of Guipuscoa, Navarre, Aragon, and Catalonia, as it is through these provinces that the evil is most likely to come. We are maturing our plans slowly. Nothing is gained by haste. One of these days, the sleeping tiger will awaken, and the sheep will be scattered in a trice."

At this moment Father Jerome appeared in the doorway, and asked his Superior's permission to retire. Father Padilla was feeling the effects of the generous wine. "See, your Excellencies," he cried, "what a long face the young brother wears! Cheer up!" he said, tapping Father Jerome familiarly on the shoulder. "'Merry people,' said our great Ignatius, 'are worth twice as much as sorrowful ones, and the vow of a Jesuit does not obligate one to hang his head.'"

Later, when they reached the cloister, Father Padilla said to his companion, "My young brother, you really must leave off some of your prudish notions, or you will not become a successful priest."

"Your theology, Father Padilla, grows daily more difficult of comprehension."

"Do you, a novice, pretend to criticise your Superior?" was the angry retort. "I shall have a poor account to give of you when next I write General Borgia."

One beautiful afternoon not long afterward, Father Jerome having escaped from Father Gregory's petty persecutions, went out for a stroll into the country. After leaving the city gates and following the river for some distance, he climbed a slight eminence and sat down to rest in a grove of cork-oaks and chestnuts.

Before him lay the quaint old city of Valladolid, its spires and domes bathed in golden light. In the valleys were corn-fields, olive-gardens, and vineyards. Yonder hillside glowed with the pink bloom of the rhododendron, while acres of asphodel clothed with beauty a barren waste. The pleasant song of farmers came to his ear. He could discern in the distance a pair of oxen that crept tardily along, tickling the surface of the ground with a tiny wooden ploughshare which they were lazily drawing over the long furrows.

The priest had no eyes for the beauty of the scene. His thoughts were self-centred. How was he to endure for a lifetime the hateful bondage of the cloister, and the dreary loneliness of an ascetic life? How was he to forever banish from his thoughts the innocent enjoyments of youth and the companionship of friends? He pictured himself as he should appear thirty years hence, if he was unfortunate enough to live so long. He would be transformed into a cold, mechanical "mass-priest," with thin face and bloodless lips, whose sole occu-

pation would be to recite the Latin services of the church with glib tongue, and to keep a sharp lookout for his dues.

A life of asceticism such as the cloister enjoins, tends to dwarf the character and to make it eminently selfish. It is not out of the world, but in it, that God would have us live and serve him. The world has claims upon us which it is cowardice to shrink from and folly to deny. Large interests help to keep the heart sound, and the sincerest prayer may be the simple doing of a worthy act from a pure purpose.

A dim perception of these truths dawned upon Father Jerome's mind, and with a groan he threw himself upon the grass and buried his face in his hands.

"Are you ill, good father?" said a voice.

Rising hastily, the priest saw before him the kindly face of a dwarf.

"Pardon me for disturbing you," continued the little man. "I was asleep under yonder trees, and your voice awakened me. Can I help you in any way?"

"Thanks, my friend. I am not ill. Who are you and what are you doing here?" he added, gazing curiously at this strange muleteer. "I have a dim recollection of having seen you somewhere."

"My name is Julian Hernandez, and I am on my way to the north of Spain with a load of small

wares which my mules carry. I saw you, Father, at the feast of 'Our Lady' at Saragossa, and if I may be so bold as to say it, you looked happier then than you do now. Does not the service of the church bring happiness?"

Father Jerome looked in astonishment at this strange muleteer. His words sounded bold, but they were uttered in a respectful manner and with a certain dignity which commanded respect. Wishing to hear the little man talk further, the priest answered the peculiar question which had just been propounded.

"Nothing can make a man happy, Julian, when his heart is full of bitterness. We were all born to trouble, and each one of us must bear his own burden."

The haggard, sorrowful face of the young priest touched the muleteer's kind heart. Looking earnestly at Father Jerome, he said with the simple directness of a child, "Good Father, our Lord Jesus Christ can comfort you and make you happy. Are you acquainted with him?"

"That is a strange question for you to ask," replied the priest with a trace of haughtiness in his tones. "I am a regularly consecrated son of the church, and studied theology at the University of Saragossa. I know all that the schools can teach about God and his blessed Son." He crossed himself mechanically as he spoke.

"Pardon me, Father, for my words. Far be it from me, a humble muleteer, to question your learning. You know a great deal *about* our Lord, but do you know him as your friend?"

Father Jerome looked perplexed, then he replied hesitatingly. "Why, certainly not. Only the great saints in the church are permitted to come into intimate acquaintance with the Son of God."

"You have been misinformed, Father."

"How so?"

"I have the Lord's own words for it. He says: 'Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends.' And he invites all to come to him who are weary or heavy-laden. Christ said that his mission was to reveal the Father, and to lead men to a knowledge of God."

A sudden suspicion crossed Father Jerome's mind.

"Julian," he said sternly, "I feel certain that you have been reading one of those proscribed translations of the New Testament into the Spanish language. Know you not that the church has imposed heavy penalties upon those who are disobedient?"

"I know all, Father, yet I am not sorry that I have read my Lord's words for myself. They have brought happiness to my soul. Will you not examine this treasure," he added, taking a small book from his pocket and handing it to the priest. "It

will lift the burden from your mind and make you sing for joy."

Touched by the earnestness of the man, Father Jerome took the volume.

"Certainly, Julian, I will read the book if you wish. The Scriptures are designed for scholars. I can suffer no harm by reading them, for if I should discover any heretical doctrine I should straightway burn the book. I thank you for your kind interest in my welfare, but I beg of you not to offer your gift to every priest you meet. I shall not betray you, but another Jesuit might."

Father Jerome placed the precious volume in his pocket, and held out his hand to the dwarf.- "I shall have to return to the cloister now. *Vaya con Dios!*" he added, making the sign of the cross.

"May God's blessing attend the reading of his word," replied Julian.

"That little muleteer is either mad or he is one of those Lutheran heretics," thought the priest as he walked slowly away. "But he has a kind heart, and I am grateful for any human sympathy. I shall not report him to Father Padilla."

As Father Jerome came out of the woods, he saw to his surprise, some distance away, Doña Sebastian. Hastily following in her footsteps was Don Luis de Menoz, accompanied by his hunting dogs. Directly he was by the maiden's side. Doña Irene seemed to be expostulating with the young noble-

man to no purpose. With dogged pertinacity Don Luis remained by her side. Father Jerome comprehended the situation immediately. With a few swift strides he reached the spot.

"Don Luis," he said in an authoritative tone, "did you not hear Doña Sebastian's request for your departure? I will myself escort her to a place of safety."

"Dog of a priest!" cried Don Luis. "You have twice crossed my path and interfered with my plans. I demand satisfaction!"

"You shall have it on my return."

Doña Irene and her companion went in silence to a cottage just outside the city gates, where they found Ursula looking about anxiously for her charge.

"Never leave your young mistress alone again," said the priest sternly, addressing the housekeeper. "I return thanks to the Holy Mother that Doña Sebastian has been protected to-day."

On his return to the chestnut grove, he found Don Luis pacing back and forth in his wrath.

"Now, Don Luis, I am at your service," said Father Jerome.

"Explain to me, your reverence, what you mean by your impertinence?"

"I desired to shield Doña Sebastian from harm. Your reputation, Don de Menoz, as you must know, has been very unsavory since your return to

Valladolid. It would have been a serious breach of etiquette for you to have been seen walking alone with her."

"I love her, Father Jerome, and by all the saints, she shall be mine !"

"If your intentions are honorable, seek her at her father's house. The road to Dr. Sebastian's home is open. But you know as well as I that your father has planned a more aristocratic alliance for you. It would suit him ill to have you wed Doña Sebastian."

Don Luis was silent. His reason told him that Father Jerome was right.

"My duties call me back to the cloister," said his companion. "If you desire anything farther of me, you can command me there. Adios !"

Don Luis uttered idle curses at the retreating figure. Then, calling his dogs, he went in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER IX.

THE JESUIT'S CONVERSION.

DOÑA IRENE SEBASTIAN sat in the beautiful summer-house with a piece of embroidery in her hands. Mother Ursula was in the kitchen by an open window which overlooked the garden and likewise her young mistress. Just now she was nodding in her chair, with her hands folded serenely across her capacious lap. A shadow fell across the walk, and looking up, Doña Irene found herself face to face with Don Luis. She had not seen him since the afternoon of her walk, and a flush rose to her cheeks as she recalled his uncourteous behavior. She rose to leave the summer-house, when his pleading voice restrained her.

“Do not go, Doña Sebastian, I implore you. If you only knew how much I have longed to see you, that I might apologize for my rudeness and beg your forgiveness. Believe me, Doña, nothing but shame and the fear of your displeasure have kept me away.”

“I accept your apologies, Don de Menoz, and I

will remain willingly if you have anything to say to me which you wish me to hear. Pray be seated."

Don Luis seemed not to heed her request, but paced nervously back and forth. His features looked harsher and more repulsive than ever. His sallow face and sunken eyes bore evidence of a life of dissipation. Some great emotion seemed to agitate him, for his thin vindictive lips trembled. His whole bearing indicated a curious mixture of boldness and timidity, of arrogance and yearning.

Lifting his cold gray eyes, he said, "Doña Sebastian, I want your good opinion. Let every one else speak ill of me, I care not, if only you do not dislike me. Tell me that you do not!" There was a repressed pleading in his tones which touched Doña Irene's kind heart, the more so that she knew these words came from lips little used to begging favors.

He looked eagerly into the calm, sweet face.

"Don de Menoz," she said gently, "I certainly do not dislike you. Indeed I know very little about you. I see that you are unhappy, and for that I am truly sorry." A good woman's instinct to comfort and help were in her kind tones.

"The saints bless you, Doña, for your words. Know you not that I love you? Will you not be mine?"

Don Luis knelt at her feet, and touched the hem of her dress with his lips.

“ Oh, Don Luis ! ” cried Doña Irene in dismay. “ Why should you love so obscure a maid as I ? ”

“ I love you, Doña, because of the goodness and purity which I see stamped on your face. When I look at you, I am no longer a sin-stained weary man, but an innocent child. When I am with you, I believe once more in God and in his saints, and by your side I know angels would guard me from harm. I know I am harsh, but in your hands my heart could be moulded as wax. You should be my guide through life, and whatever you willed should be done. Gracious and beloved señorita, will you be mine ? ”

Don Luis had approached Doña Sebastian with the most dangerous appeal a man can make to the woman he loves. A true woman always hesitates to repulse one who desires to be led by her into paths of goodness. It is a question whether her duty permit her to refuse. A struggle between duty and inclination was plainly visible on the maiden's face. Don Luis saw it, and gave a low cry.

“ You do not love me, Doña ? ”

She looked at him sadly, as she answered, “ No, Don de Menoz.”

He rose to his feet. His whole frame seemed convulsed by the shock of her refusal. His love for Doña Sebastian was the only pure passion of his life.

The maiden felt for his anguish. "Oh, do not grieve so," she cried, the tears rolling down her cheeks. "I am so sorry to refuse your request. I pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"It is love I want, Doña, and not pity," replied Don Luis as he strode fiercely back and forth. "To offer me pity is to offer me poison." Then his voice changed to one of tender pleading. "My suit has been abrupt, Doña. Take time, and think about it. Perhaps you can learn to love me." He drew near her and took her hand. She shrank involuntarily from his touch.

"It is no use, Don de Menoz. I cannot love you."

The young nobleman dropped her hand, and broke into a sneering laugh. "The priests told us right when they said that a woman can destroy Paradise. You can never realize, Doña, what your love might have done for me. Let me cease to think about it, since it is never to be mine." His features settled into their wonted harsh and sullen expression.

"Pray let us dismiss this subject," said Doña Irene. "We are causing each other needless pain. Forgive me for feeling obliged to wound you so deeply."

"Forgive you?" he echoed. "Doña, I shall never forgive you. Do men forgive the hand which smites the death-blow? I was like a thirsty travel-

ler who found a cooling stream in the desert. I was like a weary toiler who sees just before him a haven of rest. Can a man forgive the one who dashes the cooling draught from his lips, and who changes his heaven into a hell?" In the face of Don Luis the softer feelings of tenderness and regret were struggling with the demons of anger and jealousy. He looked long and earnestly at Doña Sebastian. All his devouring thirst for love was in that look. Then the hot blood surged to his face, and he demanded abruptly:

"Doña, do you love another?"

Doña Irene's cheeks flamed as she replied with dignity, "You forget yourself, Don de Menoz. You have no right to ask me this question. Suffice it that I do not love you."

"Some day you will rue the words you have just spoken," said Don Luis in a harsh voice. "My love was not a thing to be cast aside like a worthless toy. The saints be praised, a man's dream of happiness can be broken but once." Then, without a word of farewell, he strode away.

The appearance of her friend, Doña Consuelo, put an end to Doña Irene's sad meditations.

"Why do you look so downcast, amiga mia? Have you had bad news of Carlos?"

"Oh, no, Consuelo. Carlos has reached Paris in safety and the doctors speak encouragingly of his case."

She then confided the story of the young nobleman's proposal of marriage to her sympathetic friend.

"You did bravely, Irene, to refuse the conceited fellow. He thinks he has only to nod to bring every maiden in Valladolid to his feet. I hope this may serve to teach him a lesson."

Before she slept, Irene told her father all that had happened, not omitting to mention the walk by the river-side, and her meeting with Father Jerome.

"What did Don de Menoz mean, father, by saying that I should rue the day wherein I refused him? Do you think he can do us harm?"

A terrible thought passed through Dr. Sebastian's mind. The father of Don Luis was one of the Inquisitors. Would he dare?— Without stopping to follow out so dreadful a thought, the doctor answered cheerfully,

"Do not worry, my daughter. It was but the idle threat of a coward. Think no more about the matter. Don Luis cannot have my sweet wild-flower, even if he does covet it." Then he added seriously, "I would not have you marry Don de Menoz, if by so doing you could save my life. Better death, a hundred times, than to see you the wife of that libertine."

* * * * *

When Father Jerome began to read the New

Testament he did it solely to redeem his promise to Julian Hernandez. Like other Spanish Catholics of his time, he regarded the Scriptures in much the same light as we regard torpedoes to-day—very dangerous playthings in the hands of the ignorant or careless, but in capable, scientific hands, like his own, harmless and possibly beneficial.

Father Jerome was a scholar of no mean abilities. He possessed the gifts out of which great churchmen are made. The Jesuit fathers were quick to note this, and they had sharpened these intellectual weapons until they acquired the exquisite temper of a Damascus blade. Young as he was, Father Jerome could enter the arena of controversy, and with his intellectual sword deal mortal wounds to gallant adversaries. Nature had endowed him with a sensitive, truthful conscience. If at the outset the truth had been presented to him, he would have turned to it as naturally as the needle to the pole. Not what is right, but what is expedient had ever been the motto of the university. "Do your best for the church first of all," said his spiritual guardians, "then your best for yourself and your family." As a natural consequence, his moral sensibilities were warped.

At first Father Jerome carelessly turned the pages of the New Testament, reading a sentence here and there with a critical eye, anxious to discover heterodoxy. With the conceit of youth, he

expected to be able at once to detect the clever syllogisms and flimsy webs of heresy, and by his superior wisdom to crush them to atoms. Before he was aware of it, he became profoundly interested in the narrative of Christ's life and passion, and, turning back to St. Matthew, he read the four gospels consecutively, as he had opportunity. Instead of lifting the weight from his soul, the study of the Scriptures only plunged him still deeper in the gulf of despair. For the first time in his life he realized the awful consciousness of personal sin. He felt himself to be a lost sinner before the Judge of all the world. He cried out again and again in his anguish, "God is just, and I am lost ! The whole tenor of my thoughts and affections has been contrary to God's holy law; I deserve to be lost ! ' Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ' "

After weeks of careful study of God's word and of mental conflict, there came a day when, looking with the eye of faith up to heaven, Father Jerome saw a Face full of compassion and tenderness and a voice said, "Son you *are* lost. But I came to seek and save that which was lost. I came not to judge, but to save. Look on him your sins have pierced, and live." Father Jerome made answer, "Rabboni ! Master !" and in humility and reverence he laid his life at the feet of the Crucified, and rose up a forgiven, happy child of God, ready to go

forth and do God's bidding. This was to Father Jerome the "beginning of days," the birth into that new life which should be eternal.

An event occurred at this time which changed the whole current of his after life. One day, toward evening, a monk from St. Just came to the House of the Jesuits. He had a despatch, which the Emperor Charles had bidden him carry to Fray Constantino of Seville. This celebrated canon-magistral had at one time been the Emperor's chaplain and was a personal favorite of that monarch.

That night the Jeronymite brother was taken ill, and it was evident in the morning that he would be unable to deliver the Emperor's message.

"Have you not some one whom you could send in my stead?" he inquired of Father Padilla.

"There is Father Jerome," said the Superior thoughtfully. "He is really the only one who could be spared from the House just now."

So it happened that Father Jerome was sent to Seville, and his acquaintance with the noble Constantino de Fuente was providentially brought about.

Passing the gorgeous cathedral at Seville, the young priest stepped inside to view the interior of this splendid edifice. The church was empty, save for a nun, who stood fascinated before a row of ugly *san benitos* which hung upon the wall. One of these penitential garments was of unusual size,

and it was before this one that the sister stood as if rooted to the spot. It bore underneath this inscription: "Rodrigo Valero, an apostate and false prophet who pretended to be sent from God."

The nun began to speak. "Oh, no ! not sinners above all others. Rodrigo and Manuel, you wore those ugly memorials of shame and sin, but God knows your souls were white. I believe it ! Oh, yes, I must believe it, or die !"

She turned her face, and caught sight of Father Jerome, who was watching her strange actions with astonished eyes.

"Holy Mother !" she cried, and her face grew livid. "Dolores, will you give me no peace ? Who are you ?"

"I am Father Jerome Ortiz, from the House of the Jesuits at Valladolid."

Just then a noble-looking man, attired in the garb of a churchman, entered the auditorium. He spoke a few words in a low voice to the nun, and she relaxed her hold of the young priest's arm and slowly walked away.

"Do you know that sister ?" inquired Father Jerome. "She evidently mistakes me for some person she knows."

"That is Sister Justina, from the convent of St. Catherine at Valladolid. Her mind is evidently unbalanced. Every few weeks she comes and stands before these *san benitos*, and talks incoherently. I

have tried in vain to win her confidence, but she has never told me what the trouble is which so preys upon her health. Poor soul, I fear she has not long to live. Would that she might know the peace of forgiven sin ere she leaves this world."

"There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit," repeated Father Jerome.

His companion looked astonished.

"You have read the Scriptures, I perceive."

"Yes, for in them is eternal life; and they testify of Christ."

The elder man could no longer conceal his emotion. Stretching out his hand, he said, "My brother, the words of Christ are also precious to me."

"Am I addressing the most noble Fray Constantino de Fuente?" inquired the young priest.

"That is my name. And you?"

"I am a priest from the House of the Jesuits in Valladolid, Jerome Ortiz by name. I am commissioned to deliver a despatch from the Emperor Carlos into your hands."

Father Jerome presented the missive, which Fray Constantino opened and perused. A smile half sad, half humorous, crossed his countenance.

"His majesty has written that he learns much to his sorrow that there are suspicions of heresy

afloat concerning me. He implores and commands me to so express my thoughts that there shall be no doubts concerning my orthodoxy. Come now to my house, brother Ortiz, and we will have a talk after dinner."

"May the saints protect your reverence from the malice of evil men," said Father Jerome.

"Why ask the saints to intercede for me?" replied Fray Constantino. "Why should we ask favors of servants, however good they may be, when we have the Master's ear?"

After dinner, the Fray asked his guest to excuse him for a few moments, as he had a little business matter to finish. He gave Father Jerome a tract which he had written, entitled "The Confessions of a Sinner," and asked him to look it over during his absence. One paragraph in particular caught the young priest's eye.

"Wast thou not chastised for the iniquity of others? Has not thy blood sufficient virtue to wash out the sins of all the human race? Are not thy treasures more able to enrich me than all the debt of Adam to impoverish me? Lord, although I had been the only person alive, or the only sinner in the world, thou wouldst not have failed to die for me. What though the guilt of all had been mine? Thy death is all mine. Even though I had committed all the sins of all, yet would I continue

to trust thee, and to assure myself that thy sacrifice and pardon are all mine."

Fray Constantino returned. "Do you find anything heretical in that treatise?" he asked.

"No, indeed! It simply deals with sin and the need of a Saviour."

"Yet the charge of heresy has clung to me ever since this little pamphlet was issued."

"Do you not think, Fray, that when men fail to comprehend a truth, they find the term heresy a convenient label with which to brand it in the eyes of others?"

"Yes, brother, and to the larger part of the people of Spain, to-day, religion is nothing but a series of festivals and fasts."

"I should like to inquire particularly about one matter, Fray Constantino. In my study of the Scriptures, I have found no mention made of purgatory, indulgences, penances, prayers for the dead, and adoration of the saints or even of the Holy Mother herself. What am I to understand by the silence of the Scriptures on these points?"

"Father Jerome," said the Fray solemnly, "do you wish to know all God's will? Are you desirous of following Christ whithersoever he leads you?"

"Yes," answered his companion, but he trembled visibly.

"Then I will answer your question. These doctrines which the Roman Catholic Church has en-

joined upon all her followers have no foundation whatever in the word of God. They are sophistries of man's invention."

"But, Fray, surely you believe in the infallibility of the Mother Church?"

"I believe in God's word, as revealed in the Scriptures."

"O Santo Cristo!" cried Father Jerome. "Are we then Lutherans? Heretics?"

In great distress he arose and paced the floor. Fray Constantino watched him a few moments in sorrowful silence.

CHAPTER X.

COMING INTO LIGHT.

“LET me answer your question by asking you another. Are we followers of Christ? If so, are we willing to walk in his footsteps, even though they lead to Gethsemane and Calvary?”

“I cannot, I dare not, become a heretic!” cried Father Jerome. “Ask me anything but that. From my youth up I have abhorred the disciples of Luther, and have despised their faith. I will cleave to Christ and the church too.”

“In the time of Moses, God wrote these words: ‘Every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was *without the camp*.’ My brother, if the choice had to be made between Christ and the church, should you give up Christ?”

There were signs of a great struggle visible on the young priest’s face. At last he said, “I cannot give up Christ. No, if what I believe is called heresy, then God help me to be strong, and to endure as seeing him who is invisible.”

Fray Constantino grasped his companion’s hand.

"Father Jerome, you will never regret having spoken these words. If Christ calls us to leave the sin-stained, superstitious, priest-ridden church, he will hold out to us his strong right arm, so that we shall be upheld."

"But the future ! What does it hold for us ?" said the young priest with a shudder.

"Leave that in God's hands. We have only to take one step at a time. It may be that God will answer our prayers in a different way from what we expect. Perhaps defeat will come first, but truth is mighty, and in the end it must prevail. The question about separating from the Mother Church need not be settled at present. The time is not yet ripe for any radical change. If the church will let us and our Bibles alone, there is no need for us to leave her communion. It is the Inquisition which will drive us into Protestantism. At present I do not advocate any rash steps. The confessional I regard merely a chair of counsel; the festival of the saints a pious remembrance of devout men and women; the mass I also interpret in as evangelical a sense as possible."

"Has this new faith spread very much ?" inquired Father Jerome. "You know that I am entirely ignorant of the progress of this great movement."

"Thank God, it has, and this largely through the arduous labors of a brave little colporteur, who has

brought several loads of Bibles and the works of Luther over the mountains. There are about a thousand in Seville who have embraced these new doctrines. I will mention a few names to you, that when you hear them spoken of, you may know them to be among the faithful ones. You see, brother, that I trust you, even though you are a Jesuit."

"I would die first, before I would betray one of Christ's little ones," replied Father Jerome.

"The great gathering-place of the infant church in Seville is at the house of a noble widow, Doña Isabel de Baena. Dr. Christobal Losada is the leader. A large number of priests are among the converts, which renders the problem much easier. The good news has spread to some of the convents and cloisters. Almost all the monks of San Isidro are with us. In Valladolid, you will receive great help from Father Augustin Cazalla and Father Domingo Rojas. Dr. Sebastian, like Dr. Losada, is able through his professional services to reach the hearts of many. In the north of Spain, a great work is being done by Don Carlos de Seso. Mark the name well, for Spain cannot produce another so noble a Christian among her lists. His position gives him great influence, and he knows no rest in his Master's service. I wish you could attend these secret meetings in your own city, brother."

"I wish that I could, Fray Constantino, but my

movements are under the closest surveillance. Perhaps you do not know that the Order of Jesus is based on different methods from those usually employed in religious houses."

"I both understand and deplore the fact. The Society of Jesus is really a political organization, an army under a dictator. It has the immense power which absence of all scruples, a single object, and hosts of determined men all over the world, can give. The pope may by and by discover that he has created an '*imperium in imperio*,' which will ultimately limit his own power. You know the old myth of Thalaba and the sorceress Maimuna. The warrior allowed his hands to be bound with chains as fine as spun silk, thinking he could break them at will; but when he sought to do this, he found that he was held by chains, which, though invisible, were indestructible. I regard the Order of Jesus with the greatest suspicion, as did my master the great Carlos. But I tell you what you can do, brother, to develop your spiritual life, and at the same time help others. Ask your Superior to allow you to preach in some small hamlet. You can be prudent, and at the same time preach a pure gospel to hungry souls."

"Your suggestion appeals to me," said Father Jerome. "If possible, I will try and gain Father Padilla's consent."

It now became time for the Jesuit to return

home, and after a word of prayer, and many complimentary messages for the Superior and the Jeronymite monk, Father Jerome went on his way rejoicing. The last words of Fray Constantino were these: "I do not need to bind you to secrecy, beloved brother, nor do I need to remind you that our conversation must not be repeated at the confessional. Too often, in these corrupt times, the confessional is but the portal to the Inquisition."

Father Jerome gazed long and earnestly into the noble countenance of the Fray Constantino de Fuente. He returned to grasp his hand a second time, and to utter eloquent thanks. He was destined never to look upon the face of his friend again.

We have described this noble Fray at length, for he was a person of note and one who gave a great impulse to the reformed religion in the south of Spain. From the martyr Rodrigo Valero he first received the words of life, and in his highly cultured mind they developed into a harvest of living grain. Never did God prepare and man reject a more polished instrument for a noble work.

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"The trip has done Father Jerome good," said the Superior to Father Gregory. "He seems less melancholy. I think an active life would suit his temperament better than the seclusion which is

here enjoined. I must think out some plan for him."

The prior shook his head. "Father Jerome is a wild bird. Before you set him at liberty I would suggest clipping his wings."

The day after the young priest's return, one of the brothers informed him that a visitor awaited him in the convent parlor. It was his friend Alfonso de Menillo. Alfonso was quick to note his friend's changed appearance.

"What is it, old comrade?" he said, laying his hand affectionately on the other's shoulder, "what has chased the clouds from your brow?"

"Let us walk into the garden, Alfonso. I feel as if I could talk better under God's sky. I have a secret which I desire you to know, my friend, and yet I tremble to reveal it. Promise me that you will regard me with the same look of affection after I have told you, as now."

"To be sure I will, *amigo mio*. I do not think any indiscretions which you may have committed will shock me. In fact, I also have a secret to tell you."

"Your words give me courage, Alfonso. The truth is, I have doubts, serious doubts, about many of the doctrines of our church. I have positive proof that many of the tenets held by the Roman Catholic Church are simply commandments of men."

"Is that all?" cried Alfonso, bursting into a

merry laugh. "A churchman's doubts are of no consequence. All you have got to do is to recite a few Aves and Pater nosters, and they will take to themselves wings and fly away."

"But the matter has gone farther than this ! Alfonso, I am a heretic ! A Lutheran ! A Protestant !"

Father Jerome averted his head that he might not see his friend's countenance, feeling positive that a look of scorn would be there. Great was his surprise, when Alfonso sprang to his side, and seized his hand, exclaiming,

"Why, this is grand news, Jerome ! I, too, am a Lutheran !"

Their hearts were too full for utterance. Presently Father Jerome said, "What led you into the light, Alfonso ?"

"Dr. Sebastian attended me in a slight illness, and it was mainly through his teachings that I became interested. Since then, I have attended several of the secret sessions of the Protestant assembly at the house of Father Cazalla. I have also met Dr. Losada and the Don Carlos de Seso of Logrono, and their words have been helpful. And how was it with you, Jerome ?"

"A friend loaned me a copy of the New Testament, which opened my eyes to the truth, and a long conversation with the Fray Constantino established me in the new faith."

"The Fray Constantino is a right noble *camerado*," said Alfonso. "I have heard him several times myself. He advanced an idea in one of our assemblies which was glorious. It was to the effect that our beloved Spain would some time be won to this grand reformation, and that we, as a redeemed nation, should go forth to evangelize the world."

Father Jerome shook his head. "I confess, Alfonso, that I have no such roseate hopes with which to paint the future."

His friend did not heed these words. Like most of his countrymen, he idolized his native land.

"Verdad y libertad!" he cried. "Truth and freedom! This shall be my motto, and on this I base my faith. O glorious Spain! Mistress and conqueror of the world! How vast are thy possessions! The seventeen Netherland provinces, twelve kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, the two Sicilies, Milan, Tuscany, Barbary, Guinea, the African coast southwards, the Indian peninsula and archipelago, the Philippine and Molucca islands, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, and the Antilles, from Cape Horn to Labrador! Shall not our mighty Spain, which has been the victor in all these conquests, lead the way to the New Jerusalem, whose builder and maker is God? Where is your faith, Jerome?"

"Dear Alfonso, I too have faith—but not in Spain. My faith is anchored to the Rock of Ages."

* * * * *

A few weeks elapsed before Father Jerome sought his Superior and asked if he might be permitted to spend the winter in Soria, as Father Ambrose's assistant.

Father Padilla gazed at the monk in astonishment. At length he replied:

"You do not know what you are asking. Why, man, do you not know that a more desolate, bleak, God-forsaken place does not exist in Spain? The peasants belong to the lowest class, and are rough and lawless."

"I am young and strong, and I shall not mind either the cold or the roughness of the people. Besides, I long for a more stirring life. This inactivity is stifling my energies."

The Superior looked thoughtful. After a few moments he said slowly, "Father Jerome, I do not know what motive has prompted this strange request, but I am inclined to grant it nevertheless. But I wish to impress upon your mind, before allowing you to go from my sight, the sacred character of the oath of obedience which you have taken. All your strength, and all your success, depend upon the simplicity of blind obedience. 'Imperfect obedience,' said the wise Ignatius, 'has two eyes, but to its own injury; perfect obedience is blind, but in that very fact consists its wisdom and perfection.' Remember these words if temptation overtakes you, and do not seek to oppose your own

little mental light to the light of the Order. I think you consider your oath of allegiance too sacred to wilfully break it."

Father Jerome's face had grown ashen, but he answered, "I shall not forget your words, nor the sacredness of my pledges."

"Very well then, the day after to-morrow you shall start for Soria. One word more," he added as the monk was about to leave the room, "Remember this: 'The company of Jesus is like a naked sword, the hilt of which is at Rome and the point is all over the world.'"

With these enigmatical words, he dismissed Father Jerome with a wave of his hand.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NUN OF ST. CATHERINE.

IN a sumptuously furnished library Count de Menoz sat writing. He was the secretary of the Holy Office and his duties were arduous. He had just concluded a letter to the Inquisitor General Valdes, when a slight noise caused him to pause in the act of sealing the letter. He started when he saw the gaunt, wasted figure of Sister Justina. The sight evidently was not agreeable, for a look of annoyance crossed his face.

"Why have you come again so soon, Isabel? You must know that I am busy, and unless your errand is of more importance than it proved to be the last time you were here, this interview had better be postponed. The Grand Inquisitor must receive this letter before another twenty-four hours, as it contains important news. Pray speak quickly."

"I know very well, Pedro, that I am not a welcome visitor, but I have a question to ask you, and I shall not leave you until you give me a truthful answer."

"Well, what is it?" said the Count testily

"Is your nephew Rodrigo Valero alive?"

The Count started visibly.

"Of course not. Have I not told you repeatedly that the boy died soon after he was taken from his mother?"

"You lie, Count de Menoz!"

"Many thanks, sister, for your pleasant words."

The nun advanced a step, and fixed the Count's wavering glance with her piercing eyes.

"I tell you, Count, that all these years you have lied to me, and the child Rodrigo did not die."

"What proof have you that your statement is correct?" asked the Count.

"I have seen Rodrigo Valero."

The Count sprang to his feet in great excitement. "Has General Borgia proved recreant to his trust?" he began.

The nun gave her brother a look of scorn. "No one told me, Pedro. My heart discovered your guilty secret. When first I saw Father Jerome Ortiz, it was like seeing Rodrigo and Manuel Valero in the freshness of their youth. And his eyes! Santa Maria! Dolores Valero looks forth from them. No one need confirm my suspicions. I know that Jerome Ortiz and the orphaned Rodrigo Valero are one and the same person."

"Well, Isabel, since you are so positive about the matter, I may as well tell you that you have

made a correct guess. I told you that the child was dead, to ease your mind. I saw that the matter weighed heavily upon your conscience, and the holy fathers of the church decided that it was best to keep you in ignorance of the child's whereabouts. Now you know all, so pray leave me in peace. You have nothing for which to reproach yourself. The child grew into a worthy youth and an ornament to the church. He is talented, and is bound to rise to eminence. He has been rescued from perdition, and saved for the church."

"But my promise to his mother," faltered the nun.

"A promise to a heretic is not binding, even when sealed with an oath. Who, in Catholic Spain, ever heard of keeping faith with a heretic? You are a fool, Isabel, to allow your mind to dwell upon what transpired so many years ago. The priests have told you again and again, that your act was a blessed triumph of spiritual grace over carnal weakness. This useless repining I am sure they would censure as deadly sin."

The nun rose slowly to her feet. The yearning and unrest of a lifetime looked out from her haggard face. She had thrown aside her head-dress, and the short iron-gray locks made her look doubly old and worn.

"I am going now, Pedro. As I near the grave, I realize that we committed a terrible sin, and for

that we shall be terribly punished. I have known no peace since that day. My idols have been snatched from me, and bereft and alone I should be glad to die, were it not for the fires of purgatory. And do you mark my words, Count de Menoz. You need not think to escape the judgments of God. Sooner or later your sin will find you out."

Without a word of farewell, Sister Justina quietly left the room.

"Isabel grows daily more demented," thought the Count. "I must request the Abbess to confine her more closely. Her tongue may work mischief." Count de Menoz was not a man given to weighing incidents very carefully, and the impression made upon him by his sister's visit soon faded from his mind in the press of stirring events.

* * * * *

The weekly session in Father Cazalla's quiet parlor was unusually solemn. The Holy Inquisition, that name of terror, had been brought forcibly to the attention of the Lutherans of late by certain ominous signs, the significance of which could not be mistaken.

Paul the Fourth, quick to scent heresy in any part of his pontifical domains, had issued a bull which he addressed to the Spanish Inquisitor General. He enjoined upon this official to spare no efforts in the detection and extermination of

heresy; and he empowered General Valdes to punish all suspected persons of whatever rank or profession, whether bishops, archbishops, nobles, kings, or emperors. King Philip followed up this mandate with a horrible edict, which condemned to the stake all who bought or sold or read heretical books.

A few months later the pope issued another brief, in which he commanded all confessors, under pain of excommunication, to enjoin on their penitents to inform against all persons whom they suspected to be guilty of heresy. To quicken the zeal of informers, King Philip revived a law which had become a dead letter, by which the accuser should receive one fourth of the confiscated property of the accused. In this way, an arrogant pope and a cruel king played into each other's hands. While the former skilfully spread the net, the latter devised methods for driving fish therein.

Another event occurred, which quickened apprehension among the Lutherans. That ferocious prosecutor of the Jews and Moors, Gonzales Munebraga, was promoted to the office of Vice Inquisitor General. This man was peculiarly fitted to become the mouthpiece of the Inquisition. He possessed a hard, cruel nature, and an overflowing measure of fanatical zeal. He ingeniously managed the terrible machinery under his control. Owing to the advanced age and increasing infirmities of General

Valdes, Munebraga became the fitting chief of a tribunal, which sat in darkness, and which dealt blows through invisible agents. His spies were everywhere abroad. They worked long and silently underground, laying mines which would one day be exploded, exterminating the enemies of the faith.

A crisis was at hand.

Quite a large number of converts had assembled in Father Cazalla's parlor. After reading the Scriptures and offering a fervent prayer, Father Rojas said with profound sorrow, "My brethren, I bring you terrible news. The storm has burst over the Lutheran church in Seville. Two hundred have been apprehended, and the arrests are still going on."

Groans and tears were the only responses to these words.

"Our brave little colporteur, Julian Hernandez, was the first one taken."

"Julian the Little, arrested!" said Dr. Sebastian. "Ay de mí! Perhaps the report is not true."

"There can be no doubt about it. A blacksmith, to whom he showed a copy of the New Testament, betrayed him to the Inquisition. He is imprisoned in the Triana, that gloomy fortress, from the portals of which few ever pass except as they come forth to die. What horrible tortures he may be suffer-

ing to-night, only God knows. We can but leave him in higher hands."

"He knew all about our meetings. Will he not betray us?" said Juan Garcia in a trembling voice.

"No, a hundred times no!" replied Father Cazalla. "That brave heart will never flinch. One word from his lips, and we are all doomed to the same awful fate. But that word will never be spoken. We do not need to shed tears for ourselves. Let us weep for him, and pray God that his agony may be shortened. Of course no mercy will be shown so notorious a heretic. Death, in its most horrible form, will be his portion. But this is not all, my brethren. Twelve of the monks of San Isidro have fled."

"Fled!" echoed his listeners in dismay.

"Yes. It seems that they held a solemn chapter to decide upon their future course of action. It was apparent that by leaving the monastery, the little church would be placed in dire peril. So they agreed to await God's providence there. Later, twelve of their number came to feel that they could not conscientiously perform the mass and otherwise engage in the ceremonial of the church, and they made good their escape."

"They certainly have saved themselves from the violence of the storm," said Dr. Sebastian with a note of scorn in his voice. "But what of the remainder of the brethren at San Isidro?"

“Probably by this time they are under sentence of death. But let us not forget that they are in God’s hands, as well as ourselves. My brethren, let none of us be so rash as to seek his own individual safety in flight. The flight of one might be the ruin of all. It is upon the fidelity of each individual member that the safety of the church depends. God give each one of us strength to be faithful. I have also learned that the great and noble Fray Constantino has been arrested, as well as the leader of the infant church, Dr. Christobal Losada.”

“Oh, my friend, my friend !” said Dr. Sebastian in a broken voice. “The noblest heads are ever the ones most likely to fall.”

“Let us not be disheartened,” continued Father Rojas. “If I did not believe that the Lord kept watch over the ship, I should long since have abandoned the helm; but I see him through the storm, commanding the very winds. I confide entirely in his sovereign goodness. Let him govern ! Let him carry us forward ! Let him hasten or delay ! Let him plunge us even to the bottom of the deep—we will fear nothing. We are vessels that belong to him. He can make use of us as he pleases, for honor or for dishonor.”

Then raising his hands he exclaimed, “Oh, God, thine is the kingdom and thine is the power ! O Vine, abounding in sweetness and whose branches

we are, do not abandon thy shoots ! For thou hast promised to be with us until the end of the world."

These words cheered the little company of disciples, and when they separated, feelings of hope and courage predominated. The Lutherans in Valladolid had for so long a time held meetings within sight of the Holy House, and almost with open doors, that they had lost the timidity which had at first characterized their actions. Little did they dream that the sword of Damocles hung over their heads, suspended by a tiny thread, which a word,—a whisper, an incautious act, might suffice to break. Little did they dream, that the burning eyes of Juan Garcia's faithless wife had that very night peered through a crack in the curtain, and that the devil in woman's form had sped with swift feet to the House of the Jesuits.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORY OF A LIFE.

"WHAT is this I hear, dear brother Jerome?" said Father Ambrose a month after his assistant's arrival. "The relatives of Pepé the charcoal-burner have been here full of indignation. They say you refused the dying man absolution. How is this?"

"They speak truly," replied Father Jerome. "Pepé did not repent of his sins, but offered me all his money if I would grant him absolution. I plead with him to repent of his sins, and accept God's pardon, which was free for the asking. He refused to do this, and I left him to die unshriven."

"I am afraid you have not acted wisely, brother," said the old priest. "You seem to have a perilous way of tracing things out to their consequences, and I sometimes tremble for you."

"Dear Father Ambrose, I will certainly try not to be rash, but I dare not teach the smallest lie. I feel that every truth that has come into my soul is like the talent which the steward received. It is

entrusted to me, and I must trade with it for the glory of God."

"I am glad," said his companion, "that I never felt tempted to preach otherwise than the church directs, and I never dared to question her teachings. May the saints preserve your steps!"

The short winter day was drawing to a close, when Father Jerome stepped into the little church to perform mass. The old priest was ailing, and this beloved duty fell upon the shoulders of the younger man. The room, which was bare and cheerless, was nearly full of worshippers. Father Jerome had won the hearts of the rude peasants by his plain words and self-sacrifice. As he stood in the pulpit, and surveyed his unlettered audience, his eye caught sight of a familiar face. The nun of St. Catherine was leaning forward, her sunken eyes fixed intently on his face.

Within the building the daylight was fading and the faces of the congregation were indistinct. A shaft of light came from a window high in the wall and illumined the face of the youthful preacher. A great longing possessed him to tell the old, old story in such a way that peace might come to the troubled spirit of Sister Justina. Leaning forward, he said with pleading earnestness:

"Dear brothers and sisters, you want the forgiveness of sins. You have many times brought costly gifts to this church, and you have taken pil-

grimaces to distant shrines. You have made vows, and repeated prayers to Our Lady, in the vain hope of finding forgiveness. You will never find it in these ways. I tell you to-day, that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, and he alone. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. *All !* To those burdened with sin, yearning for pardon and longing for reconciliation with God, I say, Christ alone saves, saves fully, saves freely, saves to the uttermost. On the rock of God's eternal word, I take my stand. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that word shall not pass away."

"Yes, friends," he concluded, his face irradiated with a look of tender triumph, "there is One on whom we may look, and see God, and yet live ! On the face of our dear Lord ! Our dear Lord !"

A hush, as of death, pervaded the room. Every one present was thrilled with that mysterious, unique attraction, which the preaching of Jesus Christ ever inspires in the heart of sinning humanity. Without adding another word Father Jerome pronounced the benediction, and the little company dispersed. When the young priest looked for the nun of St. Catherine, she had disappeared with the crowd.

That night, Father Jerome was summoned to the cottage of one of the peasants to hear the confession of a stranger who was apparently dying. As

he expected, he found Sister Justina lying on a rude couch. She had slipped on the ice returning from church, and had suffered internal injuries which seemed likely to prove fatal in one so old and feeble. It soon became evident to Father Jerome that the aged frame had been too rudely shaken to admit of any amendment, and the sands of life were running out with steady pace.

He was impressed with the changed expression of the worn face. A calm, sweet look filled the sunken eyes. The young priest knelt by her side, and took one of her hands.

“What can I do for you, Sister?”

“The end is very near!”

“And are you afraid, Sister?”

“No, Christ is with me, and he has cleansed my soul from all sin. How can I thank you enough for bringing me his message of pardon. But God will reward you. I have much to say to you, Father, and the time is short. The valley of death is less dark than my life-path has been for long weary years. I came here to warn you against impending danger. The schoolmaster in Soria has been employed by the Jesuits as a spy, and he has carried ill reports to Father Padilla, and you will shortly be summoned to Valladolid to abjure your errors or suffer punishment. There is yet time for you to escape. I beg of you to fly.”

The nun half rose from the bed, and laid her

hand beseechingly on the priest's arm. "Fly!" she repeated.

"My trust is in God," said Father Jerome. "I do not fear what men may do unto me. Think no more of me, dear Sister. I will consider your words later. Before your strength fails, tell me what is in your heart, for the time is near when the summons will come which no one dares disobey."

Sister Justina sank back exhausted. Then rallying her feeble energies she began:

"I am about to tell you, Father, the story of your life, for that story is closely interwoven with my own. Your name is Rodrigo Valero, and you were born in Seville. You were the only child of Manuel and Dolores Valero. Your uncle was that great apostate and martyr, Rodrigo Valero, for whom you were named. You have seen his *san benito* in the cathedral at Seville, and the smaller one beside it was worn by your father.

"After your uncle Rodrigo was publicly denounced as a heretic, your father received a summons from the Corregidor of Valladolid, directing him to repair immediately to that city, as a mission of importance was about to be entrusted to him. Suspecting nothing, your father undertook the journey. How well I remember how proud your beautiful mother looked that summer day, as she raised you in her arms for you to receive your father's parting caress. Dolores never saw her

husband again. All sorts of stories were afloat concerning his fate, but no one could give any reliable information. He vanished as mysteriously as though the earth had opened and engulfed him.

"In the Valero household were a half brother and sister by the name of de Menoz, children of Count Valero's second wife. They were both married, and each had a son. They were both proud and ambitious. After the name of Valero had become a name of infamy, they wanted it forgotten. They also wanted their children to inherit the princely estates of that noble house. A little child of three years stood between them and their plans, but not for long. A priest suggested that it be taken from its mother, and placed under the care of the church to be educated for the priesthood.

"A bargain was made, whereby part of the estate was to be given to the church and the rest was to be ours. I was ambitious for my son, and I grasped eagerly at the idea, and upon me devolved the cruel task of winning the child from his mother. I had always been kind to Dolores and she trusted me. One day I asked her if the child might accompany me to a festival. She readily gave her consent. 'Bring him back early, Isabel,' she said as she brushed your curls and placed a velvet cap on your pretty head.

" 'I shall not fail to bring him back at nightfall,' I answered with mental reservations, not daring to

meet the mother's eyes for fear she would discover my secret. I took the boy and carried him to a convent, where he was to remain until old enough to attend school. It was some days before I saw Dolores. My servants put her off, telling her that I had gone into the country for a few days to give the child a little outing.

"At last I saw her, and told her the awful truth. She turned as white as the driven snow, but not a word of reproach escaped her lips. She simply lifted her sad eyes to heaven and murmured, 'Father, forgive her ! She has broken my heart !'

"I felt no pity for her, because the priests said she was a heretic, and that it was an act of piety for me to snatch the boy from his evil surroundings. Wretch that I was, I even dared to think that I was doing God service by this act of treachery.

"From this day, Dolores pined away, and soon grew so weak that she could not leave her bed. One day a Dominican priest rode to the house. He remained in her room about half an hour. I was in the house at the time, and suddenly a shriek was heard, and then another ! My God ! it rings in my ears to-day. That wretch was adding the last drop of anguish to her already overfilled cup. He told her that her husband was incarcerated for life in the prison of the Inquisition at Valladolid."

"Is he still living ?" said Father Jerome, his features drawn as in pain.

"I do not know. I have never been able to learn a word about him since that time. Let us pray not. Santo Cristo ! Twenty years in the prison of the Inquisition ! He could not have survived so terrible a fate !"

"Go on !" said Father Jerome in a hoarse voice. "Let me know all !"

"Your mother never rallied from this death-blow. In less than a month she died. But God did not forget my sin. He dealt with me as I had dealt with Dolores. My husband died in battle. My son, whom I idolized, was thrown from his horse and instantly killed. Crushed in spirit, I sought refuge in the convent of St. Catherine. Count de Menoz, seeing how my broken promise to Dolores weighed on my mind, came to me one day and told me that little Rodrigo was dead. A weight seemed lifted from my soul. Surely, I thought, Dolores has the little lad again.

"When I saw you at the festival of Our Lady at Saragossa, your striking likeness to your father and uncle attracted my attention. Your eyes were wonderfully like your mother's. Anguish filled my soul. I began to doubt my brother's story. After meeting you again at Seville, I went to see Count de Menoz and demanded the truth. He confessed that Father Ortiz and Rodrigo Valero were one and the same person.

"My story of sin and shame is ended. For more

than forty years I have known no rest. The sad face of your mother has ever been before my eyes. Blood-guiltiness has been upon my soul. To-day, for the first time, I have tasted peace. Your words have brought hope to one who has known only despair. Jesus forgives sinners. He will forgive me. My deeply injured Rodrigo, can you—forgive—me—too?”

The words came in gasps. The light from another world was on the dying face. The Sister's eyes looked imploringly into those of the young priest.

“My poor Aunt Isabel!” answered Father Jerome with tenderness, “as I hope to be forgiven myself, so do I forgive you.” He stooped and kissed the wrinkled brow.

“One word more, Rodrigo,” she gasped. “The motto of the house of Valero was this, ‘Rather death, than false of faith.’ Keep it sacred, as did your uncle and your father.” A look of joy passed over the face of the dying nun. “Peace,—forgiveness,” she murmured. Then the mournful eyes closed for the last time on the light of this world.

Sister Justina, sinning but repentant, was numbered with the dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

THE body of the dead nun was conveyed to St. Catherine, and interred in the convent burying-ground.

Two days later a lay brother from the House of the Jesuits came post-haste to Soria, with a message from the Superior, requesting Father Jerome's immediate return to Valladolid.

When Father Ambrose learned this, he shook his head.

"There is trouble brewing, my son. I advise you to make good your escape."

"That is out of the question, dear Father. I am free to confess, that after Sister Justina's startling revelations, an almost uncontrollable impulse seized me to seek safety in flight. But directly, my reason told me that this was a vain desire. Is it not more than likely that the burning eyes of the Inquisition are even now turned upon me, and without doubt every mode of egress is sedulously guarded—to say nothing of the *Hermanidad*, that vigilant body of civil police, who are ever ready

to co-operate with the authorities of the church ? No, Father Ambrose, it is impossible for me to escape my fate. I am hedged in. Mark well the actions of the schoolmaster. He dogs my steps and anticipates my every movement.

"Yet were the way open for my escape, should I be justified in breaking my pledge to Father Padilla ? Because the priests have broken faith with me and mine, is this any reason why I should commit perjury ? There is no honorable course open to me except to return, and meet my fate. God will take care of me. I am going now to the church."

A long time Father Jerome knelt before the altar praying for strength. Although but few words came to his lips, his spirit found relief in the simple attitude of prayer. Unconsciously his lips framed the words of David's prayer: "Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Rising from his knees he slowly left the church. He bethought himself of a sick peasant whom he must visit ere he left Soria. He was surprised to find a carriage at the door of the humble cottage. He went inside and found himself face to face with Doña Irene Sebastian. Impulsively, joyously, he sprang forward, his face aglow with pleasure.

"Doña Sebastian, God has granted my last request, in that he has permitted me to look upon your face once more before I go to certain death."

"What do you mean?" asked the girl, her face becoming as white as a snowdrop.

"The Superior has commanded my immediate presence at the House of the Jesuits. I am about to return to Valladolid to break the shackles which have bound me to the Order of Jesus, and to avow myself a Lutheran."

"Oh, do not go back," cried Doña Irene, laying her hand on the priest's arm. "Why do you not flee the country?"

"Tempt me not, Doña, with such enticing words. From your lips I could not withstand them. I must face the consequences of my acts like a man. I have already ventured too much for Christ's sake, not to be willing at his call to venture a little more."

"Grant me your blessing," faltered the maiden, the tears coursing down her pale cheeks.

Father Jerome gazed into that eloquent face a moment, then he said with repressed emotion, "Doña Sebastian, I have a confession to make to you. Standing so near death, I do not feel that it is wrong to avow my love for you. Ever since I met you at the festival of Our Lady at Saragossa I have loved you secretly. On my knees I have fought against this passion, but it remained unsubdued. I

have struggled to conceal it, but I have been overpowered in the contest. I am certain of one thing now. It is not wrong for me to love you. God is love, and all true, pure love is God's gift to us. Our Father made it so, when he made 'all things well.' The church of Rome demands the renunciation of every tender human tie, but I believe it is wrong. The gracious, loving God whom we serve delights in the happiness of his children. Therefore before taking a last farewell, dear heart, I desire to let you know how dearly you are beloved."

A faint blush suffused the maiden's cheek as she replied with trembling lips, "A knowledge of your love, Father Jerome, will enrich my whole life." Then with a piteous cry she added, "How can I live without you!"

"My beloved," said the priest tenderly, "God calls me to die for Christ's sake. He bids you live for him. Weep not, but rather pray that God may enable us both to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and may his richest blessing rest upon you evermore."

Dr. Sebastian now entered the room, and his presence and that of his daughter were soon explained. He had been called to Soria on consultation. Dr. Sebastian could not find words enough to express his admiration, when he learned that Father Jerome was about to return voluntarily to

the House of the Jesuits, there to stand trial for heresy.

"It is truly an honor to be accounted worthy to suffer for Christ, and how soon the summons may come nearer home, I know not. We are all living under the shadow of that grim old fortress, where the Holy Inquisition holds its terrible secret tribunal. Daughter, it is growing late. We must return."

Father Jerome shook hands with the doctor. Then he grasped both the hands of the young girl, who trembled beneath his touch. The agonized look on both of those young faces was not lost on the elder man. Comprehending the situation at a glance, he quietly stepped from the room.

"Beloved," said Father Jerome. "Until the hand of death lies cold upon my heart, until we both meet in God's heaven—who loves us and made us to love—till then I shall not cease to love you forevermore."

His frame shook with the intensity of his emotions. He gave her one long lingering embrace, and without another word left her alone.

To Doña Sebastian it seemed as though the old sweet life had ended, and a new life, full of bitterness and pain, had begun.

* * * * *

While these incidents were transpiring in this lit-

tle hamlet, Father Padilla was storming with rage in his library.

"Fool ! Idiot !" he exclaimed. "Did he not know any better than to bring disgrace upon the House of the Jesuits ?"

"I always suspected that he was a heretic at heart," said Father Gregory, "but I did not think he would dare to come out and preach Lutheran sermons. Do you think he will obey your summons ?"

"Certainly. Father Jerome has honorable instincts, and I have his word that he will return."

"What shall you do with him ?"

"Make him abjure his errors. If he refuses, I shall send him to the Holy House."

"It would be an easier way not to allow the young heretic to return," said the prior with a malicious look.

"Father Gregory ?"

"Father Padilla !"

The two Jesuits measured each other in silence.

"Explain yourself !" said the Superior. "Your words are enigmatical."

The prior resumed: "The dead tell no tales, your reverence. If Father Jerome should *accidentally* fall from one of those icy bridges which span the mountain torrent, we should be spared a great deal of trouble and disgrace. Is my meaning plain, your reverence ?"

Father Padilla stared thoughtfully into the fire for several moments.

"Can the affair be safely entrusted to your hands, Father Gregory?"

"It can, your reverence."

At length the Superior said deliberately, "The honor of the House of the Jesuits must be preserved inviolate at any cost. The end justifies the means. The cause of the Order of Jesus is the cause of our Holy Church. Whatever sin is committed for her welfare, she will absolve. You have my permission to execute your plan. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, your reverence."

"Then you may retire."

CHAPTER XIV.

WEIGHED AND WANTING.

THE family of Count de Menoz were at dinner. Don Enrique had at last received a government office, and now rejoiced in all the honors and emoluments which the title, "*Empleado*," brought. Don Alfonso was still his uncle's private secretary. The Count was a little late, and when he finally came in and sat down at the table his face wore a dark frown.

"Any news, father?" inquired Enrique.

"I should say so," replied the Count, setting down his cup of thick chocolate. "What do you think? A Lutheran church has been discovered in our very midst. I wish the devil would take these dogs of heretics who are turning the city upside down."

"I should think the devil might take care of his own," replied Enrique. "Say you not so, cousin?"

Alfonso turned pale but made no answer. The Count regarded his nephew in wrathful silence.

"Are there many arrests?" inquired the Doña Consuelo, hoping to divert her stepfather's attention from the unlucky Alfonso.

"Several hundred, I believe. There are three or four priests taken. Augustin, Pedro, and Francisco de Cazalla, and Domingo de Rojas.

"I am willing that all the priests in all the Spains should be cast into the prisons of the Inquisition," remarked Don Enrique irreverently.

The Count continued, "There was a silversmith, Juan Garcia, arrested, and a lot of other beggarly tradesfolk."

"No one cares for such rot as those," said the Doña Inez with a curl of her lips.

"So far, there are only two arrests of gentlemen of rank. The Don Carlos de Seso and the advocate Don Antonio Herezuelo. Just think of the Corregidor of Toro being thus degraded! But the worst remains to be told: seven nuns from San Belen, the Doña Ana Rojas, Doña Beatriz Cazalla, and the Doña Isabella, wife of the Don Carlos de Seso, are also arrested."

"This is quite a different matter!" exclaimed the chivalrous Enrique. "When it comes to sending ladies of rank to prison, I say the matter has gone too far."

"Horrible!" cried Doña Consuelo. "Why, the Doña Isabella has the royal blood of Castile in her veins!"

"Who among us fair ladies will now be safe?" said the Doña Inez.

"At least you will see, children," said the Count,

“that the Holy Inquisition is no respecter of persons. Wherever she finds heresy, she crushes it, be it in palace or hovel. If these noble ladies saw fit to imbibe the loathsome doctrines of Luther and Calvin, they must expect to be treated like criminals.

“By the way, the church is about to celebrate a holy festival of consecration, to purge the city from this plague of heresy and to confirm the faithful. It is my earnest wish, nay more, my express command, that every member of my family attend this service, which will be observed this day week.”

Rising from the table, he turned to his nephew and said, “Be so kind as to accompany me at once to my office.” There was a note of displeasure in his tones, which all his listeners observed.

When Don Alfonso entered his uncle’s room, he found him pacing the room.

“I see that I have incurred your anger, señor uncle,” began Alfonso.

“That you have, you young rascal. I am informed that you have many times been seen in conversation with the Don Carlos de Seso, and that you have been intimate with that renegade monk, Father Jerome Ortiz, who has been arrested for heresy.”

“Father Jerome arrested !” gasped Alfonso, sick at heart at this fearful news.

“To be sure he is, and unless he makes a speedy

abjuration, he is to be handed over to the Inquisition."

"Santo Cristo!" murmured the unhappy Alfonso.

"See here, nephew!" cried the irate Count. "Do not waste any more sympathy on that wretched monk. Save a little for me. What do you think of an Inquisitor, a Count de Menillo, harboring a suspected person under his roof?"

"If my presence has become offensive, señor uncle, I will do myself the honor of thanking you for your past kindnesses, and will leave your house at once. I certainly do not wish to remain where I am not wanted."

"Do not be impudent, you young fool," cried the Count. "For the sake of my own fair name you shall not leave this house. But I can tell you one thing! Were your name not 'de Menillo' I would not lift my finger to save you from the fire. If you have tampered with heresy, you deserve to get scorched. At the same time, I will not have every cur barking at my heels when I go out, nor our honorable name dragged through the mire."

"I should like to say to you, señor uncle,"—

"I will not listen to a single word from your lips. I do not wish to know how far your insanity has led you." Then he added in a gentler tone, "If you will listen to reason, all may yet be well. I have a government office almost within my reach,

and if you redeem yourself you may yet secure the place. Above all, please remember that the Doña Consuelo will not be allowed to wed a heretic. You know the size of the cloth; cut your garment accordingly." With these words he motioned the young man away. The Count de Menoz was announced, and remained closeted with his brother Inquisitor for more than an hour.

Don Alfonso was only too glad to receive his dismissal. He at once sought the society of his lady love. He passed through the marble-paved patio or open court, and entered a small room, exquisitely appointed, which his cousin used for her reception-room.

She was seated before a beautiful inlaid table, writing. Several books were lying on the table. Don Alfonso stood for a moment contemplating the well-rounded supple figure, the firmly poised head, and brilliant complexion of the maiden before him. Then he said softly,

"Amiga mia !"

The Doña Consuelo looked up with a bright smile, and said in a wondrously clear, magnetic voice, "Welcome, my cousin."

The young man rehearsed his trouble to attentive ears.

"The matter is even more serious than I thought," said the lady. "Why could you not have remained a good Catholic, outwardly at least ?

To tell the truth, cousin, I think none too highly of the dogmas of the church, but I do not wish to make a martyr of myself. I aspire not to such heights of sanctity, not I ! Doña Sebastian and I have had many talks together on the subject, but I told her that I should stand by the Catholic faith, if for no other reason than that I might possibly be able to serve my friends when they got into trouble."

"I do not see, Doña, how I can comply with your father's request, and attend that festival of consecration," said Don Alfonso hesitatingly. "Really it is against my principles."

Doña Consuelo looked at her lover, half pityingly, half admiringly. "Of a truth," she said at length, "the conscience of a heretic is of all things most difficult to comprehend. You strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. But one thing is settled: you *must* attend that festival."

Seeing that the young man was about to remonstrate, she laid her hand appealingly on his arm.

"If you have a spark of love for me, Alfonso, you will not refuse."

"You are the light of my eyes, Doña. I could kneel and kiss your feet," protested the ardent suitor.

"Then grant me this simple request, as a proof of your love."

"Very well, dearest lady, be it as you wish. Truly

I do not desire to anger your father to that extent that he refuse me your hand."

"Promise me one more thing, dear Alfonso. Do not by word, or deed, or look even, place your precious life in jeopardy. Should you be arrested, I swear by all the saints in the calendar that I will declare myself a heretic and share your fate."

Gazing into those flashing eyes, and seeing the look of resolution about that imperious mouth and chin, Don Alfonso felt that she would be as good as her word. What suitor could resist so beautiful a pleader? Surely not Don Alfonso de Menillo. With her love, the Doña Consuelo had woven a chain about the young man's neck, as slender as the finest floss, but as strong as steel.

"I promise, dearest lady. Surely life just now is too full of promise, for me to cast it lightly away." Don Alfonso stooped and gallantly kissed the fair hand.

Nor did the young nobleman dream that he was doing a cowardly or an unknighly thing, in promising to keep his faith a secret. The religion of Jesus was to him simply a set of dogmas. He had never accepted Christ as a personal Saviour. Secrecy meant to him the concealing of an opinion, not the denying of a friend. Bred like all Spaniards in the school of intrigue, his moral sense was not very sensitive. It is so easy to make a course of

action seem right, when it is the one which lies nearest the heart.

"You had better leave me now, Don Alfonso. I hear the Count de Menoz just going, and it would not be best for father to know that you had been talking matters over with me."

"I obey you in all things, life of my life," replied Don Alfonso.

As Doña Consuelo was passing through the hall, a short time afterwards, she saw a folded paper on the floor. Evidently Count de Menoz had dropped it. She opened it and looked at the contents. A cry of dismay burst from her lips. The paper contained a list of names of those who were to be arrested for heresy, and on the list were the names of Dr. Sebastian and his daughter.

"Don Luis de Menoz is taking sweet revenge on Doña Irene for her refusal of his hand," thought Consuelo. "My friends must be warned."

Calling an old and tried family servant, she said, "My faithful Juan, can you carry a note swiftly to Doña Sebastian, and leave no one the wiser for your errand?"

"I can, gracious Doña."

"And mind one thing," she added; "keep clear of the Alguazils."

"That I will, Doña, as I would the devil himself," muttered the old man under his breath.

Scarcely had Juan departed on his errand, when

the Count de Menoz returned to search for the missing paper. His look of bold admiration filled the mind of Doña Consuelo with foreboding. The Count remained with his brother Inquisitor some little time, and as he raised his voice she distinctly heard him say, "After the feast of consecration I will formally request the hand of your stepdaughter in marriage."

Here was an unlooked-for dilemma. Doña Consuelo fled to her room to meditate on the threatening catastrophe. There remained a week in which to plan,—and to act.

CHAPTER XV.

THE VISIT OF THE ALGUAZILS.

EVERY life has its crises. The real milestones in our experience are often the ones the biographer fails to record. It is not the sudden bereavement which tests one's strength of character, but the months of loneliness which follow; not the onslaught of disease, but the tedious hours of convalescence. To take up the duties of life, and to go forward cheerfully when the heart feels like breaking with its weight of anguish, this is heroism.

Such a crisis had come into the life of Doña Irene Sebastian.

But this great sorrow was a blessing in disguise, for it served to drive her closer to the source of Infinite Love. In her darkest hours, with childlike faith she was able to cling confidently to the Hand which had plucked the sweetest flower from her pathway. She was content to walk in the shadow, for she knew that One was beside her whose love knows neither variableness nor shadow of turning.

When Dr. Sebastian realized that he had lost his merry light-hearted daughter and saw in her place

■ quiet thoughtful woman, he cherished a feeling of resentment against Father Ortiz for revealing his passion. Then glancing again at that sweet Madonna-like face, he questioned whether he should have done any better, had he been in the young man's place.

No word relating to Father Jerome's fate had reached their ears, and no one ventured to inquire after him, as it would have excited suspicion to show interest in so noted a heretic.

About this time, the King's post brought a cheering letter from the invalid Carlos. It was as follows:

“DEAR FATHER AND SISTER : Your hearts will be rejoiced to learn that I am steadily gaining health and strength. To-day I walked a few steps with the aid of crutches. The doctors believe that I shall ultimately recover. I have had the best of care, and the most devoted of nurses. A young Huguenot maiden (Sister Margaret they call her at the hospital) has taken care of me, and no one could have enjoyed more sympathetic attention. To know her is to love her. Under God, I am indebted to her for another gift more precious even than health, the gift of eternal life. Do you recall how I scoffed at father, when on his return from the festival of Our Lady at Saragossa he said to me, 'A healed soul is of infinitely more value than

a healed body ' ? I can now realize the truth of his words. I now rejoice in God my Saviour, and my chief desire is to win souls for him. If I regain the use of my limbs, I desire to become a preacher of this blessed gospel. I long to see you all again, for we are now indeed a family in Christ, united by dearer and holier ties than those of kinship. I learn with sorrow of the persecution of the Lutherans in Spain, and I tremble for your safety. They say in France, that if the Emperor Carlos ' chastised the people with a scourge, the son Felipe holds a whip of scorpions.' I suffer the keenest anxiety on your account. Inform me of the situation and of your safety, at your earliest convenience.

" I can never thank you sufficiently for the loving care which you have bestowed so freely on your poor Carlos,—thank God ! poor no longer.

" Your devoted son and brother,

" CARLOS."

While Doña Irene was perusing this letter the second time, the door opened and Mother Ursula came in bearing a note in her hands.

" The Count de Menillo's servant brought this note, Doña Irene, and he bade me request you to read it without delay."

The lady opened the missive and read in her friend's handwriting the following:

" You and your father are suspected of heresy.

Hide at once. The Alguazils are on your track. Destroy this."

For a moment, Doña Irene's brain reeled in horror. At this distance from the Inquisition, we can but faintly picture the terror which the word "Alguazil" struck to the stoutest hearts. Familiars walking in pairs, and carrying lanterns, stalked abroad nightly seeking for unwary victims. Those who saw them coming gave them a wide berth, and when it became generally known that these promenades were of nightly occurrence, but few persons left their homes after dark.

Thoughts gather swiftly in moments of peril; one can live a lifetime in a second. After the first shock produced by this terrible warning, Doña Irene quickly collected her scattered wits. First she destroyed the note, and then she sought the house-keeper.

"Dear Mother Ursula, I have sad news for you. Father and I are under suspicion, and the Alguazils are seeking us. We must hide at once."

"Holy Virgin!" cried Ursula, wringing her hands in distress. "To think that I should live to see my noble master and his daughter suspected of heresy. Ay de mí! Truly the world is turning upside down!"

"Now, Ursula," continued Irene, "there is in this house a secret room, of whose existence no one knows excepting father and myself. We have care-

fully kept the knowledge from our servants, so that if they were ever questioned they could truthfully claim ignorance of our whereabouts. When father comes in, tell him I am safe. God grant he may reach home before the Alguazils visit the house. Good bye, for a short time !”

Irene ran swiftly upstairs. The house which Dr. Sebastian occupied had many years ago been the residence of a Moorish merchant of some consequence. When the doctor had some necessary repairs made on the building, the carpenter discovered the existence of the secret chamber. He promised to keep the matter to himself. The entrance to this room was gained through a clothespress. This closet was sheathed to the ceiling, as were all the closets in the house. Indeed a large part of the house was wainscoted. High up in the wall was a small door, and when this was slid back, a man by getting on his hands and knees could crawl through. Beyond this was a room about six feet high, having one tiny window in the roof. In anticipation of a time of need, the room had been furnished with books, writing materials, rugs, two chairs, a couch, a table, and a large lamp filled with olive oil. There was also a goodly supply of wine, dried fruits, and biscuits. The door to this room could be reached only by a ladder, and one made of rope was fastened to a hook under some clothing. Irene climbed into the loft without any trouble, and

awaited her father's return with a great deal of anxiety.

It was not long before Dr. Sebastian returned. He had only removed his cloak and cap and passed upstairs to his room when Ursula met him with the words, "The Alguazils are coming ! Irene is safe !" when the door opened noiselessly, and two of these dreaded Familiars entered. They were clad in long loose black robes, and wore cowls in which eyelets were cut, so that the wearer could see out, while his own identity remained unknown.

"Good evening, gentlemen !" said the doctor cheerfully. "May I inquire your business ?"

"We are sorry to disturb you, señor doctor, but we have been sent to arrest both you and your daughter."

"Where is the Doña Irene ?" said the doctor to Ursula.

The reply came without hesitation: "I do not know. She went out some time since and has not returned."

The doctor turned to the Alguazils. "Please allow me to examine your warrant, gentlemen."

The official document was produced, properly drawn up and duly attested and sealed with the famous seal of the Inquisition—the olive branch and the flaming sword; and over these were the words "*Misericordia et justitia.*" We marvel that these letters of gold did not turn black with shame,

at being so sadly perverted and made to subserve such unhallowed ends.

"Now, gentlemen," continued the doctor, "I have just come from a house which is full of pestilence. If you will permit me to pass into the next room and change my clothing, I will be ready to accompany you. I feel confident that I can establish my innocence and that of my daughter."

"I see no objection to granting your request, señor doctor," said one of the Alguazils, "if you will leave the door ajar. Meanwhile we will examine this room, to see if we can find any objectionable documents or books."

Dr. Sebastian left the room, and entered the clothes-press. He climbed the ladder as nimbly as a boy, and tapped gently with his fingers three times, a signal which his daughter understood. In less time than it has taken to write the account, the doctor had entered the secret room and drawn the ladder after him.

The Alguazils went leisurely from one cupboard to another, but nothing of a suspicious character was found. The prudent Ursula had some days before spirited away the Bibles, hymn-books, and pamphlets which were the dearest treasures of the household.

"It seems to me it takes the señor doctor a long time to make his toilet," remarked one of the Fa-

miliars. His companion pushed open the door and entered the room. It was empty !

"The bird seems to have flown ! Here, woman," he said sternly to the trembling housekeeper, "tell us where your master has gone ?"

"I do not know, your reverences."

One of the Familiars took up his crucifix, and advancing toward Ursula, said:

"Kneel !"

She obeyed.

"Now swear by this holy symbol that you do not know where Dr. Sebastian and his daughter are hiding."

The housekeeper took the required oath.

"She is speaking the truth !" said one of the Alguazils in a low voice to his companion.

"We seem to have been outwitted. Sooner or later we shall bag our game."

After making a careful search of the room in which the fugitive had disappeared, the Alguazils finally contented themselves with affixing the royal seal to the house, and then took their departure.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE HEART OF THE STORM.

LATE in the afternoon of a short winter day a traveller might have been seen walking rapidly in the direction of Soria. It was one of those mild days which sometimes fall into the winter and which are a harbinger of spring.

The traveller met but few people: only a charcoal-burner and two muleteers who were returning to the city with their pack-mules. They were sitting sideways on the hindermost animal, and singing a wild song of wrong and hate and revenge, the songs which have ever been sung by a proud but conquered people. The traveller listened intently. The wild fierce strain fell in with his mood.

"Hate ! Revenge !" he murmured with set lips and flashing eyes. "No fetters in the world are so strong as those which hate forges."

He fancied the muleteers looked at him curiously. He hurried along, casting furtive glances behind him as though he felt himself watched and followed. He drew his hand across his forehead. He felt as though the mark of Cain must be there, for had he not murder in his heart ?

Suddenly he came to the *Cristo de la Vega*. It represented the crucifixion. Here was a life-size figure of Christ. One hand was nailed to the cross, and the other was raised as if recording something. The traveller started as though he had seen a ghost. He knew the legend well. A man had committed murder and his crime remained undiscovered. One day the murderer, in company with a party of friends, rode across the *vega*, stopping at this spot. No sooner had the assassin knelt before the cross, than the right hand of the Christ was lifted toward heaven, and a voice like a thunder-peal said, "I am a witness!" The guilty man fainted, and when he came to his senses he confessed his crime, and paid the penalty. Ever since that time, the hand of the Christ has remained uplifted as a warning to guilty men that God is everywhere present, and that God punishes sin.

With a muttered curse, the traveller sped by this hateful spot, and with purpose unchanged he neared the little hamlet of Soria. It was all a steady ascent now. The thaw had swollen the mountain torrents, and they dashed through the icy barriers carrying death and destruction in their course. Here at last was the old bridge over which Father Jerome must soon pass.

"I will await him here," said the traveller, as he gazed like one fascinated at the dark foaming waters.

He failed to see the wiry form of Christy the gypsy creeping out of the forest of pines and firs, creeping, creeping, stealthily along like a panther scenting his prey. For months he had been waiting for an opportunity to wreak his vengeance upon the man who had so grossly insulted his betrothed. The traveller did not hear the rustle of the bushes, or the crackling of ice beneath the feet, so loudly did the raging current dash along. In the twinkling of an eye the traveller was hurled from the bridge. There were cries of agony, as a human being battled with the cruel waters. The mad, swirling stream caught him and tossed him about; it sported with him as though he were a plaything, then it swept him out of sight. The next morning, some peasants discovered the bruised and disfigured corpse of the Don Luis de Menoz, lying in the river meadows, some five miles from Soria.

* * * * *

The Superior of the House of the Jesuits was seated in the library with General Borgia. The door opened suddenly, and the prior with scant ceremony begged Father Padilla to come into the hall a moment.

“Jerome awaits an audience with your reverence,” was the startling announcement which he made.

Father Padilla changed color, but he did not lose his self-possession.

"Don Luis drowned, did you say? Very likely he slipped from the bridge! A sad accident truly! The situation is embarrassing. Did any one know of your little scheme, excepting Don Luis?"

"No, your reverence."

"Very good. Let us bury the incident fathoms deep, and never allude to it again. You may summon Father Jerome to the library at once."

In a moment the recreant monk was in the presence of his accusers.

"Traitor! Heretic!" hissed Father Padilla between his set teeth. "What have you to say for yourself?"

"I have done nothing, your reverence, of which I am ashamed. My conscience approves my action."

"Who taught you anything about conscience?" said General Borgia. "The one word you should by this time be familiar with is obedience. You must be aware that you have violated the rules of the Order in a most flagrant manner. You have set at naught the words of our wise Father Ignatius. Did he not foresee what poor fools he should have to deal with when he gave these instructions: 'Even if God had placed a senseless beast over you, you should not refuse to obey it as your guide and teacher, because God so ordered,' and again: 'If

the Holy Church declares black is white, you must not believe your eyes, but the Church.' Have you kept your vow? You have done as all heretics do: you have presumed to place you petty intelligence above the commands of God, as revealed by his church. Do you know what we shall do with you, if you do not speedily abjure your errors and seek forgiveness and reconciliation? We shall hand you over to the Inquisition, and they will condemn you to death by fire."

Father Jerome's face blanched at these terrible words, but he answered calmly, "Your reverences, it is time that we understood each other. I know the whole story of deceit and fraud and cruel wrong which the church inflicted upon my uncle Rodrigo Valero, upon my parents, and upon myself. I was forced to enter the priesthood, and if I have disgraced the Order, the blame is yours, not mine. God knows that I should have been glad, long ago, to shake off these galling fetters, if I could have done so honorably. But I have learned the truth at last, in spite of you all. I am no longer the slave of Rome. I am God's freeman. My own eyes have read the Scriptures, and nothing can deprive me of the blessed knowledge which you have striven to conceal from me. I stand on the rock of God's eternal word, and tortures or threats or death itself can never shake my determination."

The expression on the young priest's face had

undergone a change. The wavering, uncertain lines about the lips, which had perplexed General Borgia, became clearly outlined. The hand of fate had touched that secret writing, and made its hidden meaning plain. The flashing eye and firmly closed lips revealed the existence of an inflexible will. Father Jerome had the look of a man to whom defeat is unknown—the man who could say, “I will, and I do not fear death !”

The two Jesuits gazed at the youthful monk in astonishment. The words he had just uttered sounded very like those other wonderful words, “God help me, I cannot do otherwise !” with which Luther stamped his name upon a whole generation—those immortal words which are the shout of deliverance to an oppressed and priest-ridden humanity.

The Superior rang a bell sharply. Father Gregory answered the summons.

“Take this heretic,” said Father Padilla in hoarse tones, “load him with chains, and cast him into the dungeon. Three days of grace he shall have. If at the expiration of that time he is not subdued, I will wash my hands of him.”

As Father Gregory entered his own room he said to himself, “Ah, my proud Father Jerome, you may whistle for a cardinal’s hat ! You thought to be an apostle of light ! By the blessed St. Gregory for whom I was named, you shall yet be a light in

the world, but it will be in the Quemadero outside the city gates."

* * * * *

The days passed swiftly to Doña Consuelo. For some reason best known to himself, the Count de Menillo had despatched his nephew to Toledo on business, and he was not expected to return until the eve of the great festival.

In despair, Doña Consuelo resolved to take Doña Inez into her confidence. She was a brilliant, capricious creature, but withal, kind-hearted, and being just betrothed to the man of her choice, the Don Lope de Sandoval, her sympathies were naturally drawn toward the luckless lovers.

"I do not see what you want of that penniless scapegrace, sister Consuelo; but if your affections are centred on him, I will do the best I can to assist you."

Doña Inez was the incarnation of intrigue. The thought that a little drama was about to be enacted under the parental roof, requiring the utmost secrecy and diplomacy, awakened her deepest interest. Don Lope entered heartily into the schemes of his betrothed.

The night before the feast of the Corpus Domini, Don Alfonso returned. On the dressing-case in his room he found a billet. Opening it, he read the following:

“ ‘Faint heart ne’er won fair lady !’ The beautiful Doña has been promised in marriage to the Count de Menoz. ‘A leap over the ditch is worth another man’s prayer,’ so runs a good Spanish proverb. Act accordingly.

“ DOÑA INEZ.”

The young man sought his cousin immediately, and begged her to render him the necessary assistance, for he would be only too glad to take that leap which should make his beloved lady his own. Together they matured their plans, and after promising not to try to see the Doña Consuelo until he met her the next day at the shrine of St. Agnes, Don Alfonso retired to his own quarters full of pleasant anticipations.

A cloudless sky and a glorious sun ushered in the day of the Holy Feast. The mild weather had melted the snow, and the high winds had dried most of the moisture, so that the streets were in fairly good condition for the parade. The religious processions in Spain were always a magnificent spectacle.

Behind the royal family, walked the archbishop, wearing his jewelled mitre, and followed by the Chapter arrayed in gorgeous copes and robes. The Knights of Santiago and Calatrava followed, the cross upon their breasts, each knight accompanied by his page and esquire carrying flags and the em-

blems of the order. Then came monks from the different religious houses, and singers who intoned the offices of the church. Last of all, prominent citizens from the city marched in large numbers, and among these were the Count de Menillo, his son Don Enrique, his nephew Don Alfonso, and his prospective son-in-law Don Lope. In different parts of the procession images as large as life were carried, representing Christ, the Virgin, and numerous saints. The houses throughout the city were artistically draped, and the balconies were crowded with fair women, eager to witness this glorious spectacle.

When the procession came in front of the residence of the Count de Menillo, a halt was made for a few moments. One of Don Lope's friends quietly slipped into the procession, and Don Alfonso passed out of the ranks unnoticed. On the piazzas and balconies the entire Menillo household was represented, and the Count's heart swelled with pride as he saw the charming faces of his daughters, and he congratulated himself that the suspicion of heresy would to-day be wiped out, so far as his family was concerned; for was not Don Alfonso marching like a good Catholic?

As the procession moved on, Don Alfonso hurried to his room and quietly assumed the disguise of a servant. He then repaired to the shrine of St. Agnes, as he had been directed. Shortly Doña

Consuelo appeared on horseback, accompanied by her confessor, Father Cyprian, an old man of fair intelligence and benevolent instincts. He had been confessor to Doña Consuelo's mother, and he had promised the dying woman always to care for her daughter. He was not willing to be left behind, and promised to lend his aid toward averting suspicion from the young couple.

The little party made a halt at Soria, and Father Cyprian, assisted by Father Ambrose, united the Don Alfonso and the Doña Consuelo in marriage. Their destination was San Sebastian, which in due time they reached in safety. It was here that Don Alfonso had a half ruined castle which he inherited from his parents. It had been in the care of an old couple, Pedro and Maria Moratin. Although in a dilapidated condition, there were enough habitable rooms to make the old ruin a comfortable refuge for the newly wedded pair.

Doña Inez had promised to inform them if any danger menaced, but of this they had little fear. The Count de Menillo detested above all things a public scandal.

Don Alfonso had come from the battle-field like a victor, bearing his spoils with him. He pronounced himself a happy man. But was he ?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOLY HOUSE.

IT was midnight when the gloomy doors of the Santa Casa or Holy House, opened to receive Father Jerome Ortiz. Even in that awful hour, when he was conveyed from his cell in the House of the Jesuits to the prison of the Inquisition, he noticed by the glare of a torch the inscription over those iron doors: "Exurge, Domine! Judica causam tuam! Capite nobis vulpes!"—Arise, Lord! Plead thy cause! Take the foxes for us!—and he shuddered at the sacrilege. Angels must have hidden their faces and wept, and devils rejoiced at the words "Holy House" as applied to the prisons of the Inquisition, or to those other words, "Company of Jesus," meaning that band of fanatics who allowed nothing to deter them from their insane purposes.

Much to his surprise, Father Jerome was not placed in a dungeon. His cell was above ground, eight feet square, and had one narrow grated window higher than his head, through which a little light entered. There were two doors leading out

into a corridor, the inner one of iron and the outer one of oak, both heavily barred and bolted. Near the floor there was a sliding panel through which the daily rations were passed. The furniture in the room consisted of a bed of straw and a stool.

The three days in which Father Jerome lay in a dungeon in the House of the Jesuits, he dwelt on the Mount of Transfiguration and partook of angels' food. A grand exaltation of spirit possessed his soul. Now a reaction, inevitable in one of his sensitive fibre, seized him. It is true that Father Jerome surrendered himself voluntarily into the cruel hands of the Inquisition. Nevertheless, an uncontrollable desire for freedom came over him. He paced his cell like a caged tiger, and examined every nook and crevice to see if escape were possible. He sprang upon the iron door, and shook it in a frenzy of despair. He was young, and the feelings of hope and love and liberty were raging within his breast, and threatened to overwhelm him. The solitude was something terrible. Not even a footfall broke the awful stillness, and worst of all, this horrible state of things was to last, perhaps for weeks, months, who could tell?

And the end of it all was the exquisite torture of the secret chamber and the most cruel and degrading of deaths. Father Jerome was no coward, but he possessed a very sensitive temperament and he shrank from physical pain. His nature was a

strange combination of strength and weakness. What a stronger or coarser nature would hardly call pain, he felt as anguish. He had a morbid terror against experiencing suffering himself, or seeing others suffer. Now the hour had come which was to test his manhood. Pain, such as he had not dreamed of, was before him. He must force himself pitilessly to meet it. Exhausted by the conflict, he cast himself upon his bed of straw, and an agonizing prayer was wrung from his lips: "Oh, Christ, help me! A knowledge of thy love is what I need!"

It seemed to his poor tortured heart as if a voice broke the stillness, and these words fell upon his ears: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee!"

These words rang in his ears like a sweet lullaby; they soothed his quivering nerves and brought composure to his spirit. Very soon he was sleeping the heavy, dreamless sleep of physical exhaustion.

Hour after hour passed, and still he slept. Perez Galdos, the jailer, made his daily rounds, and placed a loaf of stale bread and a pitcher of water in his

cell and went his way. It was not until late in the forenoon that Father Jerome awoke with a start. He sprang to his feet and in a moment realized where he was. The terrible anguish of the preceding night passed in review before him, but the sting had gone. Never again would he be called upon to endure such mental agony. The words, "Fear not!" still echoed in his soul, and a quietness of spirit possessed him. He could even think of the future calmly. The peace of God had entered his soul, and he sat down to quietly await events.

He expected to be summoned directly before the Holy Tribunal, but the day passed and no one came to his cell. Another day and another, and still the solitude remained unbroken.

This condition of things was becoming intolerable. Anything—even torture—would be preferable. The Inquisitors were keen judges of human nature. They knew the value of time, and the efficacy of solitary confinement. Father Jerome might very easily have lost his reason, as many a poor prisoner of the Inquisition had done before him, but he tried every means to keep his mind occupied. He had committed a great many passages of Scripture to memory, and he repeated these aloud, to pass away the time and to sustain his courage.

At last after he had been imprisoned about two weeks, the door of his cell opened to admit a Dominican prior, Father Lantigua by name, a mem-

ber of the official board, whose duty it was to inspect each cell, and to make a report twice a month. He saluted the prisoner courteously.

"Are you well?" he inquired.

"As well as I can be, your reverence."

"Do you have your meals provided regularly, and are they satisfactory?"

Father Jerome thought it prudent to answer in the affirmative.

"Is Galdos civil to you?"

"Yes."

The prior turned to go, but Father Jerome detained him.

"Can you tell me when my case will be tried?" he asked eagerly.

"Not at present, I think," was the cold answer.

"The Tribunal is showing you a great kindness, in giving you so much time in which to meditate on your sins and seek forgiveness. I hope you will make good use of it."

"Is it permitted me to inquire after my friends?"

"It is not," replied the prior as he went his way.

Father Jerome thought often of his friends, and wondered as to their probable fate. He knew that the storm of persecution had burst over Seville and Valladolid. This much, the under-jailer, Gaspar Segura, had told him. This man had naturally a kind heart, and had he not feared his master Galdos, he would undoubtedly have rendered the

prisoners many a service. Jerome thought often of Fray Constantino, and of Don Carlos de Seso. To be sure he had only conversed with these brethren once, but they had each recognized in him a fellow disciple, and had spoken helpful words concerning his soul's salvation. He counted them as among his dearest friends. Then there was the brave, generous Don Alfonso ! would his faith stand the test of persecution ? And Father Ambrose, dear old man ! too credulous to doubt the dogmas of the church, yet too kind-hearted to condemn the heretic, what would this tempest do for him ?

And Dr. Sebastian and Doña Irene ! Would they be arrested ? Undoubtedly ! The doctor was a stanch Lutheran, and could not fail of being apprehended. And Irene ?

A cold sweat stood out on the priest's brow, as he thought of that delicate girl in a prison cell. He had long ago given up thinking of the tortures of the secret chamber as far as they touched him personally, but Doña Irene ! Could the judges be so cruel as to torture a woman ? He knew that they both could and would. In a moment of the keenest anguish he cried, " O Christ, we are thine. Save us, for we are powerless to help ourselves ! "

One day, how long after his entrance into the Inquisition he knew not, for he had ceased to reckon time, there was an unusual commotion in the corridor. Footsteps seemed to come and go.

Doors opened and shut quite frequently. At last a voice loud and clear chanted a versicle from the Psalms:

“Hear my voice, O Lord, in my prayer.
Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
The righteous shall be glad in the Lord
And shall trust in Him.”

The harsh voice of Galdos sounded in the corridor,

“Hark! Let no one disturb the quiet of the Holy House!”

Father Jerome thought he recognized the voice and the pure Castilian accent. Only once had he heard it, and that was at an inn where he remained over night on his return from Seville.

“Good Segura,” he said entreatingly, to the under-jailer as he thrust in his food at the noonday hour, “pray tell me who dared to sing in the Santa Casa?”

Segura looked all about him carefully, then making a pretence of examining the sliding panel, he whispered softly,

“Don Carlos de Seso.”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FLIGHT.

How fared it all this time with Dr. Sebastian and his daughter ? Early the next morning, before it was light, two more Alguazils appeared at the doctor's house. Their loud knocks were answered by Ursula.

"Have your master and mistress returned yet ?"

"They have not, your reverences."

"They have given us the slip, I fear. Some one must have warned them," said one of the Alguazils.

"Paciencia !" answered the other. "If we bide our time we shall track them. The confessional will reveal the secret."

The Alguazils went over the house again, from garret to cellar, examining cupboards and drawers, moving furniture, and kicking aside rugs. Ursula assisted them with well-assumed courtesy and respect. They spent a long time in the room which Dr. Sebastian used as his office. At last one of the men uttered an exclamation. "Here it is !" he said, moving aside a secretary and pointing to a panel much worn with use. Striking it with his fist, a hollow sound was heard.

"Come, old woman, be lively here ! If you know how to open this cupboard, do it quickly, or we will smash it in."

Ursula looked very serious, but she moved forward at this bidding and touched a secret spring.

"I suppose, your reverences, it is no crime to have such a cupboard in one's house. All families of any standing have a secret receptacle for their valuables."

The panel flew back and the Familiars made haste to examine the secret place. They found several pieces of silver-plate, one or two costly fans of Moorish workmanship, a web of antique lace, and a few other valuables. The Familiars tossed these aside with many a contemptuous expression. At last one of them found a piece of parchment. He eagerly drew it forth, but when he saw nothing more heretical than an old and beautifully illuminated folio missal, he uttered words which sounded strangely like a curse, and threw the innocent parchment on the floor.

Ursula crossed herself, and after picking up the abused folio, and smoothing the crumpled leaves, she carefully replaced it in the secret receptacle.

"My confessor taught me to treat holy books better than that," she exclaimed with spirit.

"Hold your tongue, you old idiot, or you will find yourself in hot water !" said one of the Alguazils. "Direct us to the chamber where Dr.

Sebastian changed his clothes. Look here !” he added to Diego, the man-servant. “Come with us and bring along a hammer or axe.”

The Alguazils examined every nook and crevice in and about the room.

“Strike there !” they said, pointing to the wall back of a narrow stairway which opened out of Dr. Sebastian’s room.

Diego did as he was requested, but nothing suspicious was heard in the sound. They next examined the clothes-press with care. The doctor and his daughter fairly held their breaths, as they listened to the sounds of the investigation.

“Strike there, Diego !” again commanded the Alguazils.

The Doña Irene grew as pale as death at this order, and the doctor, passing his hand over his forehead, found it clammy with sweat. There passed in review before his mind the untold horrors which would await both himself and his child, if they were discovered. The minutes seemed like hours. The suspense was well-nigh intolerable. At last Diego’s hammer fell with a crash, within a few inches of the panel door. A piece of the solid beam which ran across the top was splintered, but nothing suspicious was detected.

“I can discover no way of egress here,” said one of the Alguazils. “Dr. Sebastian must have left

the house. Let us try the stable. Perhaps we shall have better success there."

The search naturally proved fruitless, and baffled and disappointed the emissaries of the Holy Office went their way. For several days a close watch was kept on this house. Then the vigilance of the Inquisition seemed to relax. But Dr. Sebastian and his household knew with whom they were dealing, and were wary. The captives left the secret chamber only occasionally. Ursula cooked their meals, and brought them to the chamber and left them standing on a table. Later, she removed all traces of the meal. After living this sort of a life for a week, Dr. Sebastian grew desperate.

"We must get away from here, Irene. Sooner or later our presence must be discovered," said the doctor. "I will go down-stairs and talk the matter over with Diego."

The servants were overjoyed to see their master again. Diego held up his finger warningly.

"Hush!" he said, "speak softly. I saw one of those black devils not an hour since, prowling about the grounds."

"What are the bells tolling for?" inquired the doctor.

"The great Emperor Carlos is dead."

"His eel pies, sardine omelettes, and potted capons were too much for him," said Dr. Sebastian with grim humor.

And such was the fact, in spite of the copious draughts of senna and rhubarb which the court physician, who stood beside his royal patient and watched his gluttony, administered.

"They say," continued Diego, "that the great Carlos raved against the heretics when he was dying, and urged the speedy execution of his old court preachers Fray Augustin Cazalla and Fray Constantino. He also had a codicil added to his will, instructing Felipe Segundo to drive heresy from the kingdom at any price. He told his confessor repeatedly, that he committed a sin in allowing the great Luther to slip out of his clutches. 'To think that I have kept faith with that heretic,' he repeated again and again."

"What a revolting spectacle!" said Dr. Sebastian. "A man dying of gluttony setting himself up as a judge of other men's consciences! The idea of his urging his son Philip to greater fanaticism! As if that monster of selfishness, bigotry, and cruelty needed any prompter in his diabolical schemes!"

"Another thing, señor doctor," continued Diego. "Felipe Segundo has written to the regent to celebrate a solemn Auto de Fé directly, in order to strike terror to the hearts of heretics, as well as to carry out his lamented father's dying wishes. He says that he cannot return himself before October, and he ordered the spectacle to take

place without him. And, señor doctor," said Diego hesitatingly, "I'm thinking that you and the señorita had better be getting away from here before long."

"That is precisely my idea," said Dr. Sebastian.

"I will do the best I can to serve you," said Diego. "You may trust me, señor doctor."

Late in the afternoon Diego returned with a radiant countenance. In the Jewish quarter of the city he had discovered an old Jew, one of the many who had "apostatized" and who hated the name of "Christian." Through what untold agonies Isaac and his brethren had been compelled to accept Christian baptism history can give us but a meagre outline, but that outline is traced in blood. Isaac was exultant when he saw the Christians persecuting each other. He hoped they would keep up this petty warfare until not one of the hated sect remained. Still for a "consideration" this keen-eyed Jew would assist the weaker Christian party, for he despised the royal prerogative and longed to see the Spanish sovereigns and their spiritual head defeated. He agreed to shelter the entire Sebastian household until the search was over, and then to pilot them to some safe spot outside the city gates. The night following the celebration of the church festival was the one selected for the flitting. The time which intervened passed slowly and without incident. The evening planned

for their escape arrived. The little company of fugitives was suitably disguised, and having completed their arrangements were about to leave the house, when without any warning the door of Dr. Sebastian's office opened, and two Familiars appeared.

An oath burst from the lips of Diego.

"We have caught you at last, Dr. Sebastian," said one of the Familiars. "We have watched and waited for this hour, day and night. You and your daughter will at once follow us."

The Familiars of the Holy Office were so accustomed to obedience, that they did not for a moment dream of resistance. At a sign from Dr. Sebastian, he and his servant sprang upon the cowed figures, and after a short conflict, the Familiars were soon bound hand and foot and gagged.

"How do you like a taste of your own medicine, you black devils?" said Diego, as he saw his adversaries *hors de combat*.

"Hush ! hush !" said the doctor sternly. "Let us not rejoice over our enemies until we are safely out of their clutches." Hastily collecting the few things which they could conveniently dispose about their persons, they extinguished the light, and left the Familiars prisoners in an empty house.

Quickly leaving this neighborhood, they passed down a side street. Quite a distance away, they espied lanterns and two cowed figures approach-

ing. Not caring to meet these dreaded Familiars, they made good their escape into an alley. The *sereno*, or night watchman, whose duty it was to pace the streets, and call out the hours and half hours, saluted them.

"Who goes there?"

"Friends and good Catholics," returned Diego, "coming from the festival of the Corpus Domini."

The *sereno* squared his shoulders and assumed an aggressive attitude.

"You do not proceed any further until you give a satisfactory account of yourselves."

"Let us pass or it will be the worse for you," said Diego hotly.

"You cannot pass," replied the *sereno*.

"Then take the consequences!" said Diego, giving the watchman an unexpected blow in the face which knocked him senseless. The lantern clattered noisily to the ground and the light went out.

"We must run for our lives!" said Dr. Sebastian.

Diego led the way, and after traversing a labyrinth of streets and lanes, they succeeded in reaching the house of Isaac the Jew. Here they remained concealed for a week. Then they were piloted to the camp of a roving band of gypsies, where their safety was assured.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.

THE questionable honor of establishing the Holy Tribunal belongs to a Spaniard, Domingo de Guzman by name, who also founded the Order of the Dominican monks. The papal power, finding itself unable to cope successfully with heresy, called to its aid the half-crazed St. Dominic and his friars. They were genuine bloodhounds, and their scent for their prey was keen. They proved equal to the emergency, and both caught and killed those little foxes in southern France, the Waldenses and the Albigenses, which had threatened to destroy "the good corn of the faithful."

The Holy Tribunal was next called into requisition in Spain, to aid in suppressing the Hebrew Jew and the infidel Moor. Torquemada, that Dominican monk of infamous immortality, extorted a promise from the youthful Isabella, to whom he stood in the relation of confessor, that should she ever come to the throne she would devote her life to the extirpation of heresy, for the glory of God and the exaltation of the Catholic religion.

Queen Isabella faithfully executed the commands of her spiritual father, and during the lifetime of this first Inquisitor, ten thousand human beings were consigned to the flames, while ninety-seven thousand suffered infamy, or confiscation of property or perpetual imprisonment. It is not strange that upon her death-bed "Isabella the Catholic" suffered the keenest remorse for her irreparable mistake.

"For the sake of Christ and his maid mother, I have caused great misery and have depopulated towns and districts, provinces and kingdoms," she said.

There has been much said and written about the Inquisition and its fearful havoc in Spain. The historian Motley sums the matter in a single sentence, when he defines the Spanish Inquisition as "a machine for inquiring into a man's thoughts, and for burning him if the result was not satisfactory." This terrible engine of destruction was now directed against Protestantism.

The snow had entirely disappeared, and the warm breath of April was in the air, when the jailer Gal-dos entered Father Jerome's cell one morning, carrying some coarse garments on his arm. He bade the prisoner disrobe, and don a pair of loose trousers and a ridiculous sort of a yellow jacket without sleeves. It was the attire usually worn by the common criminal, and a flush of resentment

rose to Father Jerome's cheek as he proceeded to obey. He was about to put on his boots, but Galdos interfered.

"Prisoners walk barefooted into the presence of their judges," he said briefly. Father Jerome's pulse quickened and his body trembled. He was very weak. For twenty-four hours no food or drink had been brought to his cell, and he staggered from faintness. Before the prisoners of the Inquisition were summoned to meet their judges, fasting was considered an indispensable aid in breaking down obstinacy.

The jailer conducted the prisoner to a large airy room in the front part of the Santa Casa. Galdos opened the door softly, and said with a profound bow, "Here is the prisoner, your reverences."

He then quietly withdrew.

Father Jerome was in the presence of the dreaded Holy Tribunal. At a long table, six men were seated. At the head sat the president of the board, the Vice-Inquisitor Munebraga, who has been well described as "a madman with a sword." His face was a fair index of his character. It was coarse, vicious, cruel. He did not possess a single drop of the "*sangre azul*" or blue blood of Spain. He had sprung from the lower ranks, and had received his promotion to this important post because of a certain kind of sagacity and shrewdness, combined with a restless energy which made him a valuable

man in this place. He had received full powers to cite, arrest, imprison, and torture heretics without observing even the ordinary forms of law, and to execute his sentences without appeal.

Father Jerome turned from this face with loathing. No mercy or justice need be expected here. Beside him sat two Jesuits. In this instance they were General Borgia and Father Padilla. Besides these, there were the Dominican prior Father Lantigua, another Dominican monk, and a notary public. The latter bade Father Jerome step nearer the table. He held up a large crucifix and administered an awful oath. He then asked a few questions of minor importance, respecting the prisoner's name, age, and place of residence.

"Do you know the offence for which you have been brought before this Tribunal?" demanded Munebraga.

Before Father Jerome could reply, Father Lantigua said, "Do not speak unadvisedly, my son. You have the privilege of choosing an advocate who will assist you in preparing your defence. You can also summon witnesses and listen to their examination before you make any statement yourself."

Munebraga darted an angry look at the prior. Then leaning forward and fastening his cruel eyes on the prisoner, he said, 'Let us have an end to this quibbling. Are you a Lutheran or not?'

"I am !" was the prompt reply.

"Heresy is '*crimen læsæ majestatis divinæ*,'" said one of the Doctors of the Law.

Father Jerome turned to the prior. "I thank your reverence most sincerely for your suggestions, but should I take your advice, of what avail would it be ? My accusers are before me. I acknowledge myself to be a Lutheran. My doom is sealed, and certainly death is preferable to months of imprisonment. Knowing the certainty of my fate, I deem the straight road of confession to be the shorter one in the end. And now, your reverences, my position is clearly defined. Do with me as you will."

"Forsooth, we have a bold heretic here !" said Munebraga. "Why do we waste time on such as he ? He is ripe for the flames."

"As the spiritual guardian of this young apostate, I claim the privilege, your Excellency," said General Borgia, turning to the Vice-Inquisitor, "of setting clearly before the prisoner the attitude of the church toward heretics, and to reiterate to him the terrible consequences of rebellion. We do not want any man's blood upon our hands. Let us merit our motto, '*Misericordia et justitia* !'"

Munebraga looked annoyed, but he did not dare to refuse so important a personage as General Borgia, therefore he nodded assent.

The Jesuit then drew a graphic picture of the

mother church holding out her arms to her sinning children, desiring to enfold them, that she might bless them with her love. "Surely," he said in conclusion, his sincerity showing itself in the tears which glistened in his eyes, "Surely she who has borne and nourished countless hosts of saints and martyrs, is worthy of all reverence, and it is an awful thing to be cut off from her communion. To hear from her lips the words 'anathema ! anathema !' will mean fire here and fire hereafter. My son, be warned !"

The notary public now interposed a few official questions.

"Is this your book ?" he inquired, holding up a copy of the New Testament.

"It is."

"Where did you obtain it ?"

"I decline to answer."

The Doctors of the Law consulted together a few moments. Then one of them said,

"You were sent to Seville some months ago to visit the Fray Constantino. Did he avow any Lutheran doctrines in your presence ?"

There had been great difficulty in obtaining evidence against this beloved preacher which would incriminate him.

Father Jerome's eyes sparkled with indignation, but he controlled himself and replied as before,

"I decline to answer."

A shudder ran around the little circle at this daring opposition.

Munebraga said with a cruel laugh, "We may find a way, young man, to unseal your lips. There are some things which, according to the testimony of those who have experienced them, are worse than death."

Ringling a bell, he summoned Galdos, who escorted his prisoner back to his cell. In the course of the month two other examinations were made by the official board. But we will not dwell upon this wicked travesty and mockery of a trial. When all was finally over, the Vice-Inquisitor turned to General Borgia with a triumphant smile. "Confess, your reverence, that for once in your life at least you have been mistaken in your man. Is this the callow youth you expected would by this time sue for mercy? I have not seen so obstinate a heretic in many a day. He ranks with Don Carlos de Seso."

"I do not despair of him yet," replied the General. "He is not nearly as courageous as he appears. He is particularly sensitive to physical pain, and has been from a child. I think a judicious application of the rack will bring him to reason. I wish no means left untried which will bring him to his senses," he added, his strong features working with emotion, "for his soul is dear to me. I would be to him like the kind physician, who probes the

sore to the very heart, that he may save the diseased member."

It was then voted to try Father Jerome with "*peine forte et dure*;" in other words, to have him endure "The Question," or Inquisitorial tortures.

CHAPTER XX.

A NIGHT OF ANGUISH.

FATHER JEROME suffered the keenest mental anguish during the days which succeeded his examination by the Holy Tribunal. The tortures of the secret chamber, more dreaded even than death itself, hung over his sensitive spirit. Mingled with the dread of physical suffering was the horrible fear that in his weakness he should betray those whom he held dear. With prayers and tears he wrestled with his agony. Not a ray of light pierced the gloom of despair. At times the thought flitted across his mind: Did my father suffer like this? Did he remain steadfast to his faith, or did the weakness of the flesh undermine his will? Sleepless nights followed these days of suspense. His dreams were full of nightmare visions. He had reached his Gethsemane and it seemed to him that the bitterest cup ever pressed to mortal lips was given to him to drink.

At last there came a red-letter day, if such can be in the chronicle of prison life. During the day-

time the outer door of the cell was left open to admit the air. One morning, quite early, Father Jerome roused from a fitful slumber to see the sliding panel opened, and a child's hand placed an orange inside his cell. The next morning, besides his regular rations, a luscious bunch of grapes appeared. The poor captive was eagerly watching for his new visitor, and when the panel slid back he put his face to the opening and whispered,

"Quién es?"

"It is Angela!" said a child's sweet voice. "I am so sorry for you, poor señor. Can I do anything for you?"

"God's blessing on you, little one!" replied Father Jerome. "You have comforted me by your presence more than you dream."

Footsteps were heard approaching, and a woman's voice whispered, "Hush, for God's sake! If we are heard, we shall be ruined. Run away now, Angela, and watch for your father. Let me know when he begins his daily rounds."

The child departed as she was bidden.

"Whose little one is that?" inquired Father Jerome.

"She is the daughter of Perez Galdos."

"The jailer's daughter? And does she dare to comfort and cheer the prisoners?"

"Hush! dear señor, not quite so loud. Every sound above a whisper is heard in the Holy House

and reported. Yes, we dare to help God's servants in our humble way. I am the child's nurse, Maria Gonzalez. When I told Angela about these poor prisoners who were suffering unjustly and for no crime, her sympathies were enlisted and together we thought out this little plan for helping the Master's sufferers."

"May God reward you for your kindness," said Father Jerome, touched by the self-sacrifice of this humble woman. "Do you love our Lord Jesus, too?"

"Ah yes, señor, as far as a poor ignorant woman may. The Fray Domingo de Rojas, who now lies in this prison, told me that God and the Lord Jesus loved even such a sinner as I. He said a great many things to me which I did not rightly understand, but this much I have carried in my heart: that Jesus came to seek and save those who are lost; and I have been happy ever since I heard those words. But I cannot stop longer this time. Is there anything I can do for you, señor?"

"Can you give me any tidings of Dr. Sebastian's family, or of Don Alfonso de Menillo?"

The woman shook her head. "They are not in the Santa Casa. I will try and find out for you, if I can do so without arousing suspicion."

"It would be a great favor if I could learn their fate," said the priest with pleading eyes.

"I will do the best I can, señor. But Galdos is

very cruel, and should he discover what I was doing, he would throw me into that horrible cistern at the rear of the prison. More than one of his servants has disappeared mysteriously, and he is cruel enough for any atrocity."

"Do you know aught concerning Fray Constantino or Don Carlos de Seso?"

"Fray Constantino is arrested, and Don Carlos has endured the Question."

"How did he endure it?" said Father Jerome eagerly.

"The Inquisitors said that they never saw such superb courage. Not a word passed his lips that could injure any one. He is very weak, but his faith is unshaken. I hear the child coming. Galdos has evidently begun his rounds. Keep up a good heart, and rest assured your friends are thinking of you. Adios!"

"Vaya con Dios!" replied Father Jerome.

God had indeed sent his angels to cheer his discouraged servant, but he had need of his new-found strength. That very night as the chimes of midnight struck, he was roused from the first refreshing sleep he had enjoyed for weeks by the entrance of the jailer, who bade him arise and follow.

With a silent cry into the ears of the One who slumbers not nor sleeps, Father Jerome followed his guide in silence. They passed along the corri-

dor to the northwest tower, and then descended a circular stone stairway. Down, down they went into the bowels of the earth, the lantern making the darkness more apparent. The air grew damp, and a foul, earthy smell greeted their nostrils. At last the jailer paused before a series of underground dungeons, and unlocking the door to one of the cells, held up his lantern and bade Father Jerome look in. An emaciated human being was crouching close to the cold slimy floor. A collar of sharp iron spikes was around his neck and fastened to a beam, so that he could neither lie down nor sit down without bearing the whole weight of the iron and lacerating his flesh.

The poor wretch turned his hollow eyes toward his visitors, and said,

“Mercy, for the love of Jesus!”

“Recant and you shall have mercy!” replied the jailer.

The man groaned. Father Jerome shuddered.

They passed out, locking the cell after them, and proceeded to the next one. Here in a narrow chest lay a man, who was lying on sharp flints. The chest was not long enough or wide enough to allow the occupant to stretch out his cramped limbs. The framework of the lid was iron, and there were slats of iron across the top.

“Have you had enough of your downy couch?” cried Galdos with a wicked laugh. “See here,

Father Jerome, that man's hair was as black as your own when he came down here. Now look at it !” Every hair was as white as the drifted snow !

“ Take me out of this accursed hole, and I will swear anything !” moaned the poor wretch. “ God knows flesh and blood can stand no more.”

“ You are coming into a more reasonable frame of mind, I perceive,” said Galdos. “ It is a pity that you did not do so before. To-morrow I will report your case to the judges.”

“ To-morrow !” shrieked the unhappy victim. “ Now ! Now ! Santa Maria, have you no heart ?”

The sound of the piteous voice followed them until they reached the next row of cells, which were across the corridor.

A raving maniac occupied one of these. He was shaggy, unkempt, ferocious, and wasted to a mere skeleton. There was no need to inquire what had reduced the poor unfortunate to this dire extremity. For months he had shared his cell with hungry rats, toads, and adders.

“ I entreat you to show me no more suffering,” cried Father Jerome as he staggered with faintness. “ Are you men or demons that you can inflict such tortures upon human beings ?”

“ We are trying to save souls,” answered Galdos. “ Some day these unhappy men will thank us for driving them into the true fold.”

They looked into one more cell. A man lay on a bed of straw writhing in agony. Knotted cords had been wound tightly about his head so that the skin was broken, and the cruel cord threatened to work its way into the brain.

"Call the judges!" cried the man in agony. "I will confess everything!"

"To-morrow," replied the jailer. Shriek after shriek followed them, as the unhappy wretch realized that hours must elapse before relief would come.

They now entered a vaulted chamber, so constructed that the cries of the unfortunate sufferers could not reach the outer world. The room was dimly lighted by torches. Galdos bade Father Jerome sit down and look around. The jailer then went out and locked the door. In the centre of the chamber was a brazier full of glowing coals, and in this were pincers heated to a gray heat. Sharp stakes were driven into the wall and the poor victim could be hung by the feet and stifled with foul smoke. There were also cruel cords and pulleys and weights for inflicting the dreaded strappado. Then there were the leaden balls, the barbed hooks, and cords for compressing the arm, the helmet, the rack, and other cruel instruments of mediæval torture.

When Father Jerome was left alone he fell upon

his knees and cried aloud in his anguish, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me. I am weak, the weakest of thy followers! Let me not become a reproach to thy cause and a source of derision to my enemies. Save me, O my Lord and Master!"

A strength and courage foreign to his nature permeated his entire being. He was himself and yet not himself. He glanced indifferently upon the terrible paraphernalia of cruelty around him. He had lost all fear.

The heavy iron door swung on its hinges, and the jailer entered, followed by the judges, Munebraga, Father Lantigua, the registrar, and two executioners. The latter were dressed in leather jerkins, and wore a mask over their faces with holes cut for eyes, through which they glared at their already terrified victims.

"Are you ready to answer the questions which we proposed at your examination?" inquired the prior.

"I can add nothing to my statement," replied Father Jerome. "I expect no mercy from man, and I cast myself on the mercy of God. 'Rather death than false faith' is the motto of the house of Valero."

"Heretic," thundered the prior, "do you see yonder rack?"

"I do, your reverence. And if you insist on using the power which is yours, and rend me limb from limb, thank God the worst will soon be over, and I shall straightway be beyond your cruelty."

"Executioners, do your duty," said Munebraga. "If the rack fails to bring this young man to reason, we will try the thumbscrews and the Spanish boots."

The executioners came forward to seize Father Jerome, but he calmly waved them aside.

"You do not need to use force. I will myself walk to yonder bed of pain."

The rack was an oblong horizontal frame, on which the unfortunate victim was stretched naked, while cords were attached to his arms and legs. These cords were gradually tightened by a windlass, until the joints of the wrist and ankles were dislocated.

Father Jerome was bound and the executioners began their terrible work.

A cry of mortal agony came from the priest's lips, and then another.

Munebraga bade the executioners wait a moment, and the prior repeated his interrogations. But not one word which would implicate his brethren was wrung from the sufferer's lips.

The windlass creaked again. A shriek, and all was still! God had answered Father Jerome's

prayer for help, and ■ merciful unconsciousness held his senses.

There was no pleasure or profit to be obtained from torturing a victim who was past realizing pain, so Munebraga ordered Father Jerome's removal to a dungeon.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT SEVILLE.

WHEN Father Jerome returned to consciousness, he found himself in an underground dungeon chained to the wall. His only comforts were unmitigated darkness and a loathsome cell; his companions, noisy rats. Yet he was at peace. The worst was now over. He had tasted the bitterness of death, and he had nothing more to fear. He had no longings to live, no desire to see any one. His past life seemed to have drifted beyond his recall, and he lay quietly awaiting the summons which should call him to his heavenly home. He was like a ship, which, battered and spent with many a gale, had drifted into a calm and pleasant harbor, in full view of the shore, and only waited some friendly hand to tow her into port. But as the hours wore on, and the vitality of youth began to assert itself, he realized with a pang of disappointment that he was not going to die.

Soon the door of his cell opened, and Maria Gonzales appeared. The jailer had orders to see that

none of the prisoners were neglected, so that they should escape the clutches of the Inquisition by death. After prisoners had endured the Question, a woman's kindly offices were imperative.

Maria gave a low cry as she gazed at Father Jerome. There is no sadder sight in the world than a young face made old by suffering. The terrible anguish of the preceding night had prematurely aged the young man, and the look of youth had forever vanished from the worn face. Threads of silver shone in the dark hair. His face was pallid, except for a crimson spot on each cheek, where the fever burned. He moaned in his distress,

"Water, mi madre ! cool water !" Again and again the good woman raised the cup to his lips. She rubbed the aching joints with liniment, and bathed the hot brow. He whispered his thanks.

"Do not look so sad, dear señor," she said with tears in her eyes.

"I had thought that all was over, and that I should awake in the presence of my Lord."

"Take courage, señor. Those cruel men have done their worst."

A smile irradiated the face of Father Jerome. "Yes," he said in a feeble voice, "I know all the dread mystery of pain. They have done their worst, but Christ helped me as he promised. I did not betray my friends. Death is robbed of all its ter-

rors. I know that One will stand beside me in the flames, and cheer and comfort me to the end."

Maria dared linger no longer. Opening a little basket, she handed the sick man an orange and a spray of the fragrant blossoms. The delicate perfume filled the noisome cell. It stirred memories half forgotten. Doña Irene had worn a cluster in her bosom the day on which he first met her. How lovely she had looked ! He longed to see her sweet face again, but had the doors of his prison stood open, he hardly felt as though he could make the effort to win freedom. No ! To depart and be with Christ were far better.

"Thanks, *mi madre* !" he said, rousing himself with an effort. "I had well-nigh forgotten what season of the year it was. I have learned to measure time by the heavenly calendar. Yes, it is but for a moment, the anguish, the suffering; afterward the eternal weight of glory."

"Is there anything more I can do for your comfort, *señor* ?" said the poor woman, her motherly instincts aroused by the prisoner's youth and forlorn condition.

"Did you learn any tidings of my friends ?" he eagerly inquired.

"No, *señor*. I did my best to find out, but there was no opportunity. Let us look on the bright side, *señor*. They are not in the *Santa Casa*, and who knows but what they may have escaped ?"

"It is all right, either way," said Father Jerome. "God knows what is best, and they, as well as myself, are in his hands. God bless you, *mi madre*, and reward you for these cups of cold water with which you have so many times cheered his servants."

For days Father Jerome lay in a sort of trance, caring for nothing, desiring nothing. Skilful physicians visited him, and reset his dislocated joints, and allayed his fever. He heard their voices at a distance, but could not remember what they said. In his fever dreams, he seemed to hang on the far confines of the world of sense, unconscious alike of day or night, of joy or sorrow.

"Exiled from earth and yet not winged for heaven."

One day he roused from this blissful state, to find the loved face of Father Ambrose bending over him.

"My dear son," said the old man, weeping like a child. "It grieves me sore to see you like this."

"Weep not for me," replied Father Jerome. "I am at peace."

"But they have been harsh, unnecessarily harsh," said the old man, as his eye noted the horrible surroundings and the scars on the young priest's wrists.

"I have been very obstinate," said Father Jerome with a wan smile. "But the truths of God, which I have bought at such great cost, are more

precious to me to-day than they have ever been. I cannot recant."

"Cannot you hold these views, and still submit to the Holy Church?"

"No," replied Father Jerome. "The church seeks to come between me and God. Christ is the door of the fold, as well as the Shepherd. It is he who unites us to his church, not the church to him. The church can neither give life nor take it. But tell me, dear Father, if you know aught concerning the brethren?"

"The great Fray Constantino was betrayed into the hands of the Inquisition, and now lies in a dungeon, under sentence of death."

"Oh, my noble friend!" moaned Father Jerome.

"The Fray had concealed some of his Lutheran books in the house of a Protestant lady of rank, the Doña Isabella Martinia. She was arrested. Her son, hoping to divert suspicion from himself, met the Alguazils who came to search his house, and told them that if they would preserve him from harm, he would show them something hidden in the cellar of his mother's house, more valuable in their eyes than gold. After receiving their promise, he guided them to the place where the Fray Constantino's books and manuscripts were hidden. When the Fray was confronted with these documents, he frankly admitted that they were his, and contained his confession of faith. He was thrown

into a dungeon and will perish in an Auto de Fé which is soon to take place at Seville."

The tears stood in Father Jerome's eyes.

"The word of the Lord abideth forever," he murmured to himself.

The door of the cell was now opened and Father Lantigua appeared.

"Your time has expired, Father Ambrose. I trust you have labored faithfully with this erring one."

"The sight of his dear old face has done my heart good. I thank you heartily for this indulgence," said Father Jerome.

"We hope that conversation with one you seem to love and honor will lead you to repentance," said the prior.

The two churchmen left the cell, and the prisoner was once more in darkness.

Father Ambrose made no attempt to conceal his emotion. The tears ran down his cheeks, and his feeble frame shook with sobs.

"Can you not do something for my poor young friend?" he said at length, grasping the prior's arm with the energy of despair.

"I have already done more for him than my conscience approves," said the Dominican, shaking off his companion's arm, and looking at the tear-stained face with pitying contempt. "I have reasons of my own for feeling a deep interest in Father

Jerome. I am acquainted with his history and his antecedents. I should be glad to save him from death. General Borgia is surprised at his obstinacy. I reminded him of the fact that the gale will break the mighty oak, but it only bends the sapling. The General has suggested a plan, which we shall try if we can gain the consent of the Grand Inquisitor and also of the Supreme Council. I will not tell you what the plan is, for it is foolish to arouse false hopes in your breast. It is more than doubtful if we gain the consent of the official board. If Father Jerome were not such an obstinate heretic, more sympathy would be shown him."

"He cannot help it," said Father Ambrose. "It is in his blood."

"Then he must die!" was the cold reply.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE.

IN an ancient castle in San Sebastian, among a group of cork-oaks, Don Alfonso de Menillo and his bride had passed six months of their wedded life. Consuelo in her radiant young beauty was the happiest of wives, and Don Alfonso the most devoted of husbands. They had received an assurance from Doña Inez that Count de Menillo had forgiven them their escapade, and that they could visit Valladolid in safety, whenever they so desired. She furthermore went on to say, "Of course father was angry at first, but when he learned that Father Cyprian was with you, and that you were living as orthodox Catholics should, he got over his fit of temper. As for the Count de Menoz, the news of his son's death so cut him to the heart, that he had a shock of paralysis and has not walked a step since. There is much joy in the city on account of the arrest and imprisonment of so many heretics. The Sebastians were lucky enough to escape. Father Ortiz is still in prison. Don Lope is as delightful as ever. Come and see us as soon as possible."

This letter aroused Don Alfonso from his fleeting dream of happiness. Deep down in his heart, he knew that he was a coward. He had concealed his colors, and allowed the bullet to find nobler and truer hearts. At best, he was only a recreant soldier. He had lost his hold upon the faith he had embraced. He had not been true to his conscience, and his moral nature had suffered immeasurably. His confidence in God and in himself was shaken.

The half-forgotten conversation with his friend came back to him. He recalled how he had boldly avowed his faith in Spain, as the promoter and friend of the Lutheran religion, and had declared "Verdad y libertad" to be his motto. Father Jerome had replied, "My faith is anchored to the Rock of Ages." Herein lay the difference between these two men. One trusted an earthly arm, the other a divine; one anchored to Spain, the other to Christ.

While Don Alfonso was thus soliloquizing, Doña Consuelo entered the room humming a gay Spanish ballad:

" In fair Sevilla, in fair Sevilla
Where resides my best beloved :
In a quiet little street,
Where the neighbors friendly greet,
Maidens from their windows neat,
Sprinkle flowers so gay and sweet,
There my anxious heart would be !
My heart ■■ longs to be !"

The young husband gazed upon that bright face with tenderness and admiration. Love had transformed the quiet reserved girl into a handsome queenly woman. Her eyes, in which glowed all the fire of her southern skies, rested upon Don Alfonso with proud, exulting joy.

"You look sad, *amigo mio*," she said, twining her arms about his neck, and pressing her cheek fondly to his. "Wherefore these clouds? Are you not happy, dearest?"

"Yes, madly, selfishly happy," replied Don Alfonso. "But, my beloved, did you know that you wedded a coward?"

"A *de Menillo* a coward?" cried Doña Consuelo with flashing eyes. Never! Have you not risked your life twice in duels, that not the slightest taint of dishonor might attach to your noble name. The idea to call yourself a coward!"

"But I am a coward, nevertheless, *amiga mia*. My actions do not deserve a gentler name. Did I not desert my nearest friend, the one who has stood to me in the relation of brother, in the hour of his sorest need? I did not lift a finger to help him, when in my secret heart I hold the same views. I have met with the brethren in their meetings, and deserve the same punishment, but I ran away from it like a coward."

"Let the fault be mine, dearest," said Doña Consuelo. "I gave you no choice but flight. I drew

you away from danger to a place of safety. Why lose one's life for the sake of a creed?"

Don Alfonso sighed. "Your words are true, beloved. Those matchless eyes bewitched me, and those loving wiles have dragged me farther than you know. I shall never have any respect for myself, until I act what I think, and speak what I believe. As soon as may be I shall make a journey to Valladolid, and if possible save Father Jerome."

"Let us not dwell on this sad theme longer," said Consuelo. "If I am such a sorcerer as you have described, let me try my skill to dissipate your unusual depression."

She seized a Moorish zither, and drew her fingers across the chords. Soft notes of harmony swept through the room. Then she began the song so dear to the heart of the Spaniard, the prelude to the *cancionero* of the Cid.

Hardly had these tones of exquisite sweetness ceased, when the door opened without ceremony.

"Señor don Alfonso, I would speak with you."

It was the voice of Maria the housekeeper.

With the dilatoriness of a true Spaniard, Don Alfonso answered, "Will not this afternoon do just as well?"

"Señor, it is important that I speak with you directly."

Something in the tone aroused Don Alfonso. He went into the hall and closed the door.

"Two monks from the House of the Jesuits at Valladolid have just passed through the town," began Maria.

"Are they in search of me, do you think?" said Alfonso with a quickening of the pulse for which he despised himself.

"Ay de mí, no!" replied the housekeeper. "Why should they suspect a noble Catholic gentleman like yourself, who is so strict in his observance of church duties, and who keeps a confessor in his own house? No, señor, do not be alarmed. These brethren came to announce a great Auto de Fé which is to take place in Valladolid this month. The date is not yet fixed, but it is soon. I knew that you had friends in whom you were interested, and thought that you ought to be informed at once."

"I shall start for Valladolid in the morning," said Don Alfonso with decision. "Tell Jayme to prepare everything for my journey, and to be in readiness to accompany me." He then hastened to break the news to his wife.

After the first wild burst of grief had passed, Doña Consuelo rose and stood before her husband.

"Remember, amigo mio," she said with flashing eyes still gemmed with tears, "remember that your fate is mine. For my sake have a care! Be prudent! I swear that for love of you, I would go to prison and to the stake!"

Looking into that determined face, Don Alfonso realized that here was a will which more than equalled his own.

"I will take no unnecessary risks, rest assured of that, beloved," he said, soothing her with all a lover's fondness. "You must see for yourself how my love for you has made me callous and indifferent to everything outside this roof. It is time that I awoke from this selfish dream of ease and pleasure. God has opened my eyes, and henceforth I desire to be a more valiant soldier."

"Doña Consuelo smiled, and although there were tears in those passionate eyes, there was a gleam of triumph also. She knew how dearly she was beloved. She knew that Don Alfonso would sacrifice everything,—yes everything, rather than imperil her life or her happiness.

The cords of human love are strong !

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EVE OF THE AUTO.

OF that long ride from San Sebastian to Valladolid Don Alfonso remembered but little. As they neared the capitol, all was bustle and excitement. A guard stopped them at the city gates.

"Remove your swords, señor!" was the curt command.

The Castilian blood in the young nobleman boiled with indignation.

"Wherefore do you address me like that?" he demanded. "Out of my way, caitiff, or by Our Lady, thou shalt have a taste of the blade."

He drew his sword, but another guard stepped forward and restrained him.

"We are under orders, señor, from the regent herself. It is the eve of the Auto, and no one can bear arms in the city to-day. Neither can your horses enter. No horse or diligence, even if it carried King Felipe himself, could enter these gates. Our commands are explicit, and we do not dare disobey orders."

Finding threats and arguments alike useless, Don Alfonso and his servant retraced their steps to the nearest inn, where they left their weapons and their horses. They then directed their steps to the city once more.

Don Alfonso was exceedingly anxious for an interview with the Lord Inquisitor, and after bidding his servant amuse himself for a time, he repaired to the magnificent residence adjoining the Santa Casa, which was the abode of Gonzales Munebraga. The Lord Inquisitor was out driving, but was expected to return shortly. The gorgeous palace, the gardens laden with rare exotics, and the servants in costly livery, were in marked contrast to the dismal dungeons not many feet away, where the poor prisoners of the Inquisition languished.

Soon the blare of trumpets announced the return of the executive. An elegant coach, drawn by four horses with gold-trimmed harnesses, dashed into sight, accompanied by a small retinue of churchmen and other dignitaries on horseback. The Lord Inquisitor, clad in gorgeous robes, and blazing with jewels, stepped from the coach. Don Alfonso impetuously sprang forward and met him face to face.

"I crave an immediate audience with your reverence."

Munebraga cast his eye contemptuously over the soiled and dusty apparel of the young man, then he replied with his accustomed arrogance,

"Begone from my sight ! I listen to no complaints and grant no favors on the eve of the Auto."

The elegant retinue swept up the path to the palace, and disappeared within to enjoy a sumptuous repast. Don Alfonso stood as if rooted to the spot. His opportunity had come and gone, and nothing had been gained.

A monk who had observed this little episode stepped forward, and touched him on the arm.

"Father Ambrose," cried the young nobleman, "how glad I am to see you ! You knew and loved Jerome. Can you give me any tidings concerning him ?"

"Let us walk in the garden by the river side," said Father Ambrose. "We shall be alone there."

They strolled along the gravelled walks, until they reached a summer-house, which they entered.

"Does Jerome appear in the Auto to-morrow?" inquired Don Alfonso in a choked voice.

"Our Lady be praised, no !" said the old priest. "But they say that if he remains obstinate, he will suffer in the next 'Act of Faith.' Ay de mi ! That I should live to see this calamity !"

"Will he not recant ?"

"No. He is ready and willing to suffer death."

"Has nothing been done to save him ?"

"Oh, yes. General Borgia has worked day and night to try to bring Father Jerome to a sense of his sinfulness, and every means known to the In-

quisition has been brought to bear upon him; but in vain. At the outset, Father Jerome surprised the Board of Inquisitors by confessing himself a Lutheran. He has endured the Question, and is now confined in one of the worst dungeons in the prison. He is weak and emaciated, and I hope and pray that he may die of prison fever before his awful doom can be executed. The prior of the Dominican convent has taken an unusual interest in this case, and he hinted that another plan might be adopted to save Father Jerome. I could not gather what he meant by his words, they were so vague and unsatisfactory. General Borgia feels the situation keenly, for Father Jerome was his favorite pupil; and besides, the honor of the Society of Jesus is at stake."

"Do you suppose I could gain permission to visit him?" faltered Don Alfonso.

"Do not suggest such a thing if you value your liberty," replied Father Ambrose. "I am thankful that the Lord Inquisitor denied you an audience. He is a very suspicious man and would have distrusted you. Your request would have been denied pointblank. No one is allowed to visit the prisoners excepting the church officials, and even these are limited to the Jesuits and Dominicans. Any sympathy for these unfortunate prisoners would be regarded as a symptom of heresy, and for the sake of your charming wife, be prudent, Don Alfonso.

There are already too many poor captives in yonder Holy House."

"Could I not bribe the jailers to at least treat Jerome humanely? They say Galdos is a brute."

"Possibly," replied Father Ambrose. "Yet I have good reasons for believing that the alcalde pockets most of the money, and the poor sufferers see but little of the results. Still you will have to trust to this man's honor, since there is no other."

"Think you that the Lord Inquisitor could be bribed into granting me a sight of Jerome's face? The 'Almighty Dollar' is an opener of doors, you know."

"Banish that thought at once, Don Alfonso. I am certain that his Sanctity would resent a bribe. So many people have approached him in this way, that he is quite sensitive on this point."

"Has the brute a heart? If so, I entreat you to tell me how to reach it. They claim that every man has a vulnerable point somewhere in his constitution."

Father Ambrose thought a moment before replying. Then he said, "I have only been here a few days, on business relating to our friend's case, but in these few days I have seen that the way to reach the heart of his Sanctity is through his adopted son, a lad of some dozen or fourteen years. A handsome present bestowed upon him might open his lordship's heart."

"It shall be done!" said Don Alfonso.

Sounds of angry voices floated to their ears, succeeded by loud cries for help. Father Ambrose and Alfonso hurried in the direction of these cries. Close to the pier, a large rowboat had anchored, and two poorly dressed women were trying to alight. A lad, dressed in a gorgeous velvet suit, with ruffles, buckles, and jewels in profusion, had drawn a toy sword and was striking viciously at the defenceless females.

"What is the trouble, Don Pablo?" inquired Father Ambrose.

"These miserable beggars are trying to land on private grounds. I have told them to be off, but the fools haven't the wit to obey."

"Kind Father," said the poor woman, emboldened by the sight of the compassionate face of the old priest, "can you gain an audience for me with the Lord Inquisitor? I want to beg on my knees for tidings of my husband. Three months ago, the Alguazils entered our house at midnight, and no tidings can I learn concerning his fate."

"It will be impossible to approach his sanctity until after to-morrow," said the old priest gently, "you had better return to your home at once."

"I hope your old man will be burned in the Auto to-morrow!" cried the boy. "My! won't it be rare sport to see those Lutheran dogs dance and howl in the flames!"

The women burst into tears. Don Alfonso sprang forward and seized the lad by his perfumed locks and shook him as if he were a terrier. Then he took him on the toe of his boot and sent him sprawling some distance away.

"There, you impudent varlet, learn a lesson in manners!" he cried, white with passion.

The boy picked himself up, and with howls and curses ran in the direction of the Lord Inquisitor's palace.

"Ay de mí!" said Father Ambrose with a frightened face. "We are both ruined. Yonder lad was his lordship's darling and the idol of his heart, the Don Pablo Munebraga!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ACT OF FAITH.

“DON ALFONSO, you must fly, and that at once !” continued Father Ambrose. “Yonder scapegrace will bring Munebraga’s servants to arrest you.”

“Things have reached a pretty pass in Spain, if a Castilian noble can be arrested for no other offence than pulling a saucy boy’s hair,” cried Don Alfonso.

“For more trivial offences than that his Sanctity has thrust men into the prisons of the Inquisition to die,” said the old priest. “You must keep out of his sight and prefer no requests, as you value your liberty. But pray make haste to depart. I will remain and excuse the affair as best I can. My good women, will you allow this nobleman to return to the city in your boat ? He has endangered his life by his rash act.”

They readily consented, and the boat hastened away from this dangerous spot, and none too soon. Servants from the palace of Munebraga came without delay, to inquire into the disgrace-

ful scene, and to make arrests. Father Ambrose was unceremoniously ordered to leave the palace.

The morning of the 21st of May, 1559, all Valladolid was astir at sunrise. The lords and ladies decked themselves in their bravest attire and hastened to the Great Square where the "horrible and tremendous spectacle" was to take place. Don Alfonso stationed himself at the window of a shop, where he could command a view of the whole scene. Although Father Ambrose felt confident that Jerome was not to be sacrificed at this Auto, yet Alfonso had misgivings. Until all the prisoners had filed past his window, he should not feel certain as to his friend's fate. So in weariness and despondency he watched the splendid pageant as it swept past.

A huge scaffold had been erected in the square, and in it was an immense cross surrounded by twelve lighted tapers. Under a gilded canopy near the scaffold, were seated King Felipe's sister, the regent Joanna, and his son, the ill-omened Don Carlos, together with a few ladies of high rank. First in the procession were bands of school children carrying the cathedral cross, and sweetly singing that grand hymn:

"Vexilla Regis prodeunt—
Fulget Crucis mysterium—
Quo carne carnis Conditor
Suspensus est patibulo."

"The banner of the King goes forth—
The Cross, the radiant mystery—
Where, in the frame of human birth,
Man's Maker suffers on the tree."

Next came the prisoners who were to be publicly disgraced. They were ludicrously attired in the ugly *san benito*, which was a yellow coat without sleeves, and covered with pictures of devils, dancing in the flames. A fool's cap was worn on the head. In these robes of infamy they were led forth to furnish amusement for this immense throng, on this great festival day.

Don Alfonso gazed eagerly at this little band of men and women whom the Inquisition had declared to be infamous. Some of them he recognized. There was Juan Garcia the silversmith. It was rumored that his wife, who had long been jealous of her husband, had dogged his steps one night when he attended the regular weekly session of the Lutheran church, and had betrayed the Protestants into the hands of the Inquisition. For her murderous services she was pensioned for life.

Don Alfonso recognized the famous advocate Antonio de Herezuelo, the two knights Don Christobal de Padilla and Don Pedro de Rojas, and the three priests, Pedro, Francisco, and Augustin Cazalla. Their faces were worn and emaciated, but they wore the proud, triumphant look of heroes after a signal victory.

With horror, Don Alfonso saw a band of ladies approaching, most of them young and beautiful, in spite of their grotesque costumes. There were seven nuns of San Belen, Doña Ana de Rojas, Doña Beatriz Cazalla, and several other ladies of rank. Don Alfonso covered his face with his hands and groaned.

“Ay de mí, my Spain ! I am this day made to blush for thy terrible deeds !”

There were thirty prisoners in all, and Father Jerome was not among the number. With a sigh of relief the young nobleman sank back in his chair, exhausted by the agonizing mental strain. The rest of the spectacle remained unnoticed by him.

Following the prisoners were the prelates and high church dignitaries, chanting the fifty-first psalm:

“Have mercy upon me O God, according to thy loving kindness,”

and the mighty throng united in one loud prolonged *miserere*. Next came the Vice-Inquisitor Munebraga on a superb horse, attired in the magnificent robes of his office. He, in turn, was followed by the Inquisitors with their officials and familiars all on horseback, while above them floated the crimson flag of the Sacred Office.

The procession halted in front of the scaffold.

Melchior Cana, Bishop of the Canaries, had been imported for this occasion to preach the sermon. His oration was a fierce denunciation of heresy, and a eulogy on the efficiency of the Holy Office. The Inquisition, he graphically described as a "heavenly remedy, a guardian angel of Paradise, a lions' den, in which Daniel and other just men could sustain no injury, but in which perverse sinners were torn to pieces." The Bishop then approached the Regent, who was holding aloft the holy sword, and administered the oath to her majesty, who duly swore upon the crucifix to maintain forever the sacred Inquisition and the apostolic decrees; to which the Bishop responded,

"So may God prosper your Highness and your estates !"

The heretics, for the sake of convenience, had been divided into two bands: the reconciled and the relaxed. There were sixteen of the former, and fourteen of the latter. By "reconciled" was meant those whom the Holy Church had pardoned and granted life, but not liberty.

Contrast the treatment of the penitent sinner of the church of Rome to God's treatment of the same, as set forth in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Instead of the best robe, Rome offered a robe of infamy; for the Father's house, lifelong imprisonment in the dungeons of the Inquisition;

for the Father's welcome, averted looks and solemn anathemas !

By the "relaxed" were meant those whom the Inquisitors found obstinate, and who were handed over to the secular arm for execution, because the Holy Office was averse to shedding blood. Those who at the last recanted were mercifully strangled before being cast into the flames. Those who remained steadfast were burned alive.

Such was the Spanish Inquisition, a tribunal superior to human law, owing no allegiance to the powers of earth or heaven ! Those who were reconciled were now remanded to prison, and the remainder were conducted to the *Brasero* outside the city gate.

Of the fourteen "relaxed" heretics, twelve were declared penitents and were strangled, and only their lifeless bodies were consigned to the flames. Only two were burned alive—the advocate, Antonio Herezuelo, and the priest, Francisco Cazalla. The Fray Augustin Cazalla stood among the penitents, for he was considered too important a personage to be allowed the full privileges of martyrdom. The priests circulated the falsehood that he had become reconciled to the Holy Church. As he was gagged, he could not refute this atrocious lie. Eye-witnesses stated that there was such a look of sadness on his countenance as moved some to tears.

Mechanically Don Alfonso followed the crowd outside the city, to the Quemadero or Burning-Place, where twelve lifeless bodies were cast into the flames and two living victims heroically met their fate. "Like the song of the lark which floats down the air, when the sweet singer itself is no longer visible," so from out the cloud of flame and smoke was heard the martyr's song of triumphant praise:

"O God, we praise thee! We bless thee! We give thanks to thee for thy great glory! Amen and Amen!"

At the close of that beautiful spring day, naught remained in the Quemadero but a heap of ashes. No man dared to gather the despised dust, but God watched over it, and in his own good time he punished the murderers. When Spain destroyed the men and women whom God had raised up to be her leaders and instructors, God left her to her fate. As Spain's Armada was dispersed before the breath of God, so her spiritual and intellectual life crumbled into nothing, because of its own hollowness. Behold in Spain a country where ignorance and fanaticism have been allowed full sway! She has been rent asunder by fierce internal warfares, and the instability of her institutions has passed into a proverb!

"Though the mills of God grind slowly
Yet they grind exceeding small!"

Though with patience he stands waiting,
With exactness grinds he all."

Don Alfonso's conscience troubled him more and more. Had he really any kinship with noble souls like these? Could he step boldly forward and avow his belief in the reformed doctrines? Was he ready to seal his confession with his blood? No, he could not. He dared not! These men and women possessed something which made them insensible to torture, ignominy, and death. What was the source of their strength? Alfonso asked himself this question again and again. Then the overwhelming thought came to him that at the next Auto his friend Jerome would stand in the Quemadero, to die the most horrible of deaths!

Angry with God, with Spain, and most of all with himself, Don Alfonso retraced his steps to the King's Inn.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EXPERIMENT.

THE dungeon of Father Jerome was visited one day by Father Padilla and Father Gregory. The two Jesuits looked with malicious triumph upon the worn countenance of the youthful heretic, and noted his dismal surroundings.

"Art ready yet to listen to reason?" inquired Father Padilla.

"I neither can nor will recant!" was the firm reply.

Stung by his obstinacy, Father Gregory made answer: "There were some heretics last week in the Auto at Seville who had been as obstinate as you, but when they felt the flames they were only too glad to become reconciled. There were Dr. Christobal Losada and the Fray Constantino."

"Has the noble Fray been murdered too?" interrupted Father Jerome.

"He was to have suffered death in this Auto, but he died in his dungeon of prison fever a few days before. His effigy, however, was burned at

the stake. He died reconciled to the church, as did Dr. Losada and several other prominent heretics."

"It is a lie!" cried Father Jerome. "You seek to slander these noble men, the latchets of whose shoes you are unworthy to loosen. With death staring me in the face, I cast your infamous lie back into your teeth, cruel, heartless men."

Exhausted by his passion, Father Jerome sunk back on his bed of straw.

The Jesuits shrugged their shoulders and left the cell. They knew full well that they had added a drop more of bitterness to the already overflowing cup.

While this conversation was going on, General Borgia and Father Lantigua were closeted. The General had evidently been pleading for Father Jerome.

"You must make due allowance for the taint of heredity," he was saying. "The stubborn Protestant blood runs in his veins, and is now taking a natural revenge. I advised his education for the priesthood, thinking this the best way to crush out the germs of heresy, but I did not make due allowance for the law of heredity. The spirit of his Protestant ancestry has risen in him, to combat the tonsure and the cowl. Surely the name of Valero has been disgraced sufficiently to enable us to deal leniently with this lad, who is really not to

blame for his sad inheritance. 'What is bred in the bone will crop out in the flesh,' you know."

The prior looked thoughtful.

"There is a great deal of truth in your words," he said at length.

"Then why not hazard the plan I suggested?" pursued the General eagerly.

Father Lantigua remained silent. At last he said, "Don Manuel Valero, or as we style him here, Don Paulos, has been an inmate of the Dominican prison for twenty years. He is a sincere penitent if ever there was one. I think his influence over Father Jerome would be beneficial. Blood is thicker than water, and certainly the ties of kinship ought to prove stronger than this new-found fanaticism. But I have other reasons for favoring your plan, General. Twenty years ago I was selected to break the news of her husband's fate to Dolores Valero. Holy Jesus! I shall carry to my grave the look of anguish which came over that young face. She called me cruel, and those mournful eyes, like Father Jerome's, have haunted me to this day. And I think the young creature was right when she called me cruel. I feel now, that in my devotion to the Mother Church I was needlessly harsh. I made the poor thing suffer more than was strictly necessary. I should like to make amends for this, by showing all the mercy possible to her son. For this reason

I am in sympathy with your plan. We have tried all the harsh means at our command; let us see if tenderness will melt the stony heart. If you will accompany me to the palace of the Grand Inquisitor, we will present our case."

General Borgia acquiesced, and the two churchmen went to execute their mission.

A few days later, as the shadows of evening were falling, Galdos entered Father Jerome's cell accompanied by the under-jailer, Segura. He bade the prisoner to rise and put on the garments which he had brought with him. It was impossible for the poor tortured limbs to obey without assistance, and Segura, moved with compassion, helped him into the clean clothes.

Was there some new torture devised with which his captors would now torment him? thought Father Jerome, or had they come to lead him forth to die? He cared little as to what their errand was. He was like the traveller, who having climbed the mountain-top, viewed calmly the storm raging below. His soul inhabited the clear sunshine of God's presence. Galdos left the cell a moment and Segura whispered,

"Be of good cheer, señor. You are about to be moved to the Dominican prison, at General Borgia's instance. You will receive kind treatment there, and I am glad that you are to see the last of that brute Galdos."

Father Jerome pressed the jailer's hand in grateful silence. The return of Galdos prevented any answer.

It was fortunate that the Dominican convent adjoined the Santa Casa, for the poor captive could not walk without assistance. In a short time he found himself in a comfortable room above ground, and plenty of wholesome food was set before him. With a heart full of gratitude for this improvement in his material condition, he lay upon his couch and slept tranquilly.

The next morning General Borgia and Father Lantigua visited him.

"I thank you, kind Fathers, for this change of prisons; but if by this mercy you are seeking to convert me, I fear you are doomed to disappointment. My fate is sealed, and the sooner death comes the better it will be for me. I do not desire, your reverences, to enter these comfortable quarters under false pretences."

"We do not feel that your case is a hopeless one, my son," replied General Borgia. "I am confident that you will soon see and repent of your errors. There is not to be another Auto de Fé until October, when one will be solemnized on King Felipe's return to Spain. Between this time and the first of October, I fully expect that you will be reconciled to our Mother Church."

"We are now about to try the experiment," said

Father Lantigua, "of allowing you a companion. You are to be permitted to enjoy the society of a highly cultured gentleman and a sincere penitent. He was once a heretic like yourself; and, like you, he uttered bold words, but he was led to see his errors and become reconciled to the church. He is serving a life imprisonment as a penalty for his disobedience. I am hoping much from his edifying conversation. Give diligent heed to his counsels and admonitions, I entreat you, that they may make you wise unto salvation."

"May I inquire the name of this remarkable penitent?" said Father Jerome.

The prior hesitated a moment. Then he said, "He is known among us as Don Paulos."

CHAPTER XXVI.

DON PAULOS THE PENITENT.

THE room into which Father Jerome was now ushered was comparatively large. It had one good-sized window which looked out upon an open court. There was a table with a lamp upon it and several devotional books which had been approved by the church. Two chairs and a fairly comfortable couch completed the furniture of the room.

When Father Lantigua opened the door, Don Paulos was kneeling before a large statue of the Virgin and her Babe. They waited in silence until he had completed his devotions.

“Don Paulos, I have brought you a companion to cheer your solitude,” said the prior.

The penitent bowed courteously but remained silent. He was a man not much more than fifty years of age, but he resembled a man of seventy. His hair and beard were as white as snow, and his figure was bent. Father Jerome did not wonder at this, when later he saw him remaining prostrate before Our Lady for an hour at a time. And these

protracted devotions were repeated at stated intervals throughout the day and night.

The face of the penitent was attractive, and it appealed strangely to Father Jerome. It was refined and intellectual. Suffering, both physical and mental, had ploughed deep furrows on cheek and brow, but there was a patient sweetness in his expression that was touching.

Don Paulos did not seem inclined to talk, and for several days he paid but little heed to his companion in solitude. He was courteous, but aside from the bare civilities, he did not offer to converse. After Father Jerome had roomed with him a week, Don Paulos seemed to awake as from a dream, and the young man became conscious of the penitent's look of searching inquiry. He seemed to be rousing from a lethargic sleep, and his benumbed faculties were endeavoring to assert themselves. At last Father Jerome said pleasantly,

"What do you find in my countenance so engrossing, Don Paulos?"

The penitent started guiltily as though detected in a fault, and replied with hesitation, "Your face reminds me of one who was as dear to me as my own soul. Your eyes are so like hers."

A sudden wild thought seemed to seize him. His face flushed. His breath came in quick gasps as he cried, "What was your name before you assumed monastic vows?"

"Rodrigo Valero," said Father Jerome in a voice which thrilled with pride.

The effect of these words upon the penitent was appalling. With a low cry, he fell out of his chair in a swoon. Surprised and startled at this unusual display of emotion, Father Jerome laid him on his couch. He chafed the cold hands and poured a little wine, which was left from their repast, through the closed lips. He soon revived and opened his eyes. Seeing the face bending over him, he put his arms about the young man's neck and kissed him.

"My son, my son!" he cried in accents of joy. "My little Rodrigo! God has restored you to me, unworthy as I am; praised be his name!"

Then as he met Father Jerome's wondering gaze, he added, "You have doubts as to my sanity, Rodrigo. You need have no such fear. My name in the world was Don Manuel Valero. I am your father."

Father Jerome gave such a joyous shout that it reached the ears of Father Lantigua. He immediately repaired to the cell. Father and son were locked in a close embrace, while the elder man was lavishing tears and caresses upon the head leaning on his breast. It was some moments before either prisoner became aware of the prior's presence.

When Father Jerome discovered him, he arose

and bowing respectfully, kissed the Superior's hand.

"I cannot find words to express my gratitude for your gracious act, your reverence," he said in broken tones. "I never expected to find my father in this world. God will reward you for your kind act."

Hard-hearted as the prior had become, and accustomed to pathetic scenes, this episode touched his heart, and something like a mist rose before his eyes. The young priest's face, so tender and passionate, reminded him of another,—a woman's face. He could never recall his experience with Dolores Valero without a pang. It was with a feeling akin to pleasure that he watched the look of delight in the face of Dolores Valero's son.

"Father Jerome," he said gently, "you know best what will reward me for the pleasure I have afforded you. Imitate your good father's example, and like him become a sincere penitent. He will be only too glad to save your soul and body from death. Prove your gratitude to be deeper than words, and I shall always be rejoiced to think that I hazarded this experiment."

The young man's countenance fell at these words. He realized the force of the temptation which confronted him. That it would shake his faith to the very foundation he knew well. He was speechless.

Father Lantigua left the cell greatly encouraged, and reported favorably to General Borgia. "Time is all that is needed," he said. "Don Paulos has found the key to the rebel's heart, and I have little doubt as to the result."

When they were once more alone Don Paulos said, "What did Father Lantigua mean when he said I was to save your soul and body from death?"

"Father, I am a Lutheran under sentence of death, reprieved through the clemency of General Borgia and the prior. They interceded for me before the Supreme Council."

"But you will recant, will you not?" said Don Paulos anxiously.

"Let us not discuss that subject to-day, father. Nothing must mar the joy of our meeting. Rather tell me about yourself."

The penitent passed his hand over his brow and a troubled expression came into his face. "I, too, was a heretic, as was my brother Rodrigo. You were named for him, son. I was providentially brought to see my sin, and I renounced all my errors and returned to the bosom of our Holy Church."

"How long have you been here?"

"Twenty years as nearly as I can remember."

"Did you endure the Question?"

"No, my son. That anguish was mercifully

spared me, but a greater one was inflicted. Let me try to recall how it happened. I was sent as I supposed on a government mission to Madrid. When I reached that city, I was arrested and taken to Valladolid and incarcerated in the Dominican prison. For months I lay in a cell, seeing no one but the jailer and two Dominican monks. Father Lantigua especially labored with me. He argued, pleaded and threatened, until I grew bewildered. I pined for freedom, and at last I was told that if I would confess my sin, and promise to abjure all my errors, I should receive absolution and be returned to my beloved Dolores.

"I believed these words, and I made the required confession, actuated by my longing to see my loved ones. There came to my cell one day my half-brother, Count de Menoz. He engaged me in conversation, and gave me a goodly quantity of liquor. When my tongue was unloosened, he suggested that I had recanted in order to procure my liberty, but that I still believed the Lutheran doctrines. What I replied I have no knowledge. I remember that we were very hilarious, and that my guest remained until far into the evening. The next day I was summoned before the Tribunal. Witnesses testified that my recantation was a fraud, and I was promptly sentenced to imprisonment for life and the perpetual *san benito*.

"I think my reason left me for a time, for of the

next year I have no recollection. All is a blank. When I came to my senses, I found myself in this room, and here I have remained year after year in solitude. News reached me of your mother's death and of your removal to a convent. I was told that you were a promising youth, and that you were destined to redeem the name of Valero, and to purge it from the taint of heresy. Father Lantigua has always treated me kindly, and through his teachings I have learned to become submissive, and to accept what he tells me without question. Indeed, without books, I could not defend the Lutheran doctrines, and I long ago gave up the struggle. I desire to pass my last days in peace."

"Poor father, how you have suffered!" said Jerome.

"It is all over now," replied Don Paulos. "It sometimes seems as though I were made of stone and could not feel. God has mercifully taken from me all longings, and the days pass peacefully."

"Have your penances been severe?"

"At the outset they were. My first penance was to be stripped and beaten by the priests with rods, from the door of my prison to the church, three Sundays in succession. Now it is all different. I keep three Lents during the year. For occupation I recite the service of the church day and night. I repeat the Pater nosters seven times dur-

ing the day, ten times during the evening, and twenty times at midnight. Besides this, I sleep a great deal, read my breviary, and at rare intervals, I have been allowed pen, ink, and paper, so that I could write down my thoughts for the edification of other penitents. I had become so accustomed to solitude, that I demurred when Father Lantigua said you were coming. He knows best, as he always does," concluded Don Paulos with a docility which showed how thoroughly the Superior had broken the will of his victim and held him in subjection.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONDEMNED.

THE days passed swiftly and pleasantly to Don Paulos and his son. The weeks glided into months. Father Jerome sought continually to revive in his father's mind recollections, well-nigh forgotten or deeply buried, of the words of Christ. It was slow, uphill work to rouse the drowsy, apathetic mind. The penitent's sensibilities had been benumbed, and it would take years to bring his faculties to their normal condition, if indeed it ever could be done.

Father Jerome related his own experience. He quoted his conversation with Fray Constantino and Don Carlos de Seso. He repeated daily such passages of Scripture as were suited to his father's present condition of mind and body. That his words produced some effect was evident in his appearing to take less interest in his acts of devotion, and in sometimes unconsciously failing to prostrate himself before Our Lady at the appointed times.

“How did my uncle Rodrigo learn the truth?” inquired Jerome one day.

Don Paulos evinced strong emotion as he replied, “Rodrigo had no teacher but God’s Spirit. He was suddenly possessed with the idea that he must read the Bible. The only available one was the Latin Vulgate. In order to read this, it became necessary for him to revive his half-forgotten studies. He worked day and night, until he had mastered the Latin language. Then he read the Bible and he found there truths which were precious to his soul. He was not content, but must needs tell every one of the good news. He labored especially with the clergy, because he said the priests were raising barriers between God and men, and their vices were disgusting men with the name of religion. As you may well suppose, the clergy received his words with scorn. They taunted him with being an unlettered gentleman, and they demanded his authority. He directed them to the word of God.”

“Did none of the priests hear him gladly?”

“Yes. Rodrigo talked with Dr. Juan Gil, who was at that time canon-magistral of Seville, and advised him to search the Scriptures as the source of living truth. He did so, and great success attended his preaching. Then there was Dr. Vargas and Dr. Constantino de la Fuente, both of whom were converted by Rodrigo’s words. Your uncle

Rodrigo was a good man, my son. God forgive me if I sin in saying so. He died under the ban of the church, which is a dreadful thing. The last words I ever heard him utter were these: 'None can close the doors of the church triumphant against me, for the keys thereof belong not to man.' Had Rodrigo been a poor, obscure man he would have been burned at the stake, as was San Roman in Valladolid, some years later. But he had rich and powerful relatives who interceded for him. Rodrigo was punished with a living death, a fate harder for one with his active, sanguine temperament to bear than the chariot of fire would have been."

"My uncle," said Father Jerome, "was the herald who went forth and announced the battle. He made a way for the rest to follow. Oh, my father, if you only knew what a glorious harvest has sprung from the seed which he sowed, you would rejoice. I can conceive no nobler mission than his. Oh, my honored father, will you not believe those precious words of Christ again, and be happy in him?"

The penitent shook his head sadly. "The past is gone from me, my son. The fount of my affections is frozen. When they told me that my beloved Dolores was dead, something gave way in my heart, and I cannot feel any emotion."

Just then Father Lantigua and General Borgia

entered the room. It was now time to bring matters to a crisis. After a few questions concerning their material welfare, General Borgia turned to Father Jerome and said,

“ My son, we have been much pleased with your mental attitude since you have been here. You have been both grateful and submissive. The time has now arrived for me to ask you if you will become a penitent like your father, and return to the bosom of the Holy Church ? ”

A look of pain crossed Father Jerome's face.

“ Think me not ungrateful, I beg of you,” he said, “ but my decision has not been changed one iota since the day I entered this room. I am a Lutheran, and as such I will die. To equivocate or to profess a different faith would be to deny my Lord. In these long months of weary anguish, he has become a real presence, and although invisible, he is dearer to me than an earthly friend.”

General Borgia covered his face with his hands and groaned.

“ My son ! My son ! Why are you determined to destroy yourself, body and soul ? ”

Father Lantigua now spoke.

“ Do you not realize that you are a condemned heretic, doomed to suffer death by fire ? The Supreme Council has pronounced this sentence upon you, if you continue obstinate. In a week another solemn Act of Faith will be observed, to celebrate

the nuptials of our pious King Felipe and his youthful bride. You shall have one more day in which to decide your fate."

During this conversation Don Paulos listened like one who was hearing a revelation. Indeed his mind was in such a condition that he had not realized that his son was under sentence of death and would one day be torn from his arms. The sharp tones of the prior, and the familiar phraseology of the Inquisition, made everything clear to his mind.

With a cry like that of a wounded animal, Don Paulos fell upon his knees, and embraced the prior's feet.

"Spare me, your reverence!" he cried in piteous tones. "Do not deprive me of my son! Pity an old man whose life has been wrecked. Have you not bereft me of enough already? You cannot be so cruel as to cast my Rodrigo into the flames! Oh, no! you are kind! You are good! You will let my punishment, which has lasted for twenty years, suffice for us both." Heavy sobs choked his utterance. Signs of a sharp mental struggle were visible on the prior's face.

"Rise, Don Paulos!" he said not unkindly. "You know not what you ask. I should be an unworthy servant of the church if I heeded your request and mitigated the punishment which yonder apostate richly deserves. Do not plead with me. Rather plead with your ungrateful son. His fate

is in his hands, not mine. He has only to say the word and the sentence of death will be commuted. Address yourself therefore to him. To-morrow at this time we will return for his final answer."

The anguish of the next twenty-four hours we will pass over in reverent silence. The father's grief, his passionate pleadings, were to Father Jerome like the stab of a lancet on an inflamed surface. But he remained firm, and Don Paulos at last ceased to plead.

The next forenoon General Borgia appeared at the appointed hour. His face was stern and white.

"Your final answer, what is it?" he said in harsh tones.

"The same as yesterday. I shall never recant."

The Jesuit looked at the sorrowful yet triumphant young face with more of pity than anger.

"Then I will bid you farewell. I shall see you no more. Words are now useless. I am disappointed in you. Prepare to meet your ignominious death this day week."

Turning on his heel he left the room.

Father Jerome realized that his earthly day was ending. The night with its welcome repose was near at hand. Soon into the golden harvest-home the weary servant would enter with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Some days later one of the Dominican lay

brethren was conversing with a handsome gypsy girl.

"A brighter pair of eyes I never saw," he said, pinching the olive cheek, "and as for those lips ! By the Mass ! for one kiss, a man would grant you any request !"

"Your words are brave, but I will put them to the test," said Carmen, for it was the daughter of the gypsy chief who spoke. "I know one of the captives in yonder prison. He once did me a great kindness. If you could manage to give him this loaf of bread of my making, and this luscious bunch of grapes, I will pay you the price you ask."

"What is the prisoner's name, fair gypsy ?"

"Father Jerome Ortiz."

The lay brother hesitated. "It is a very risky thing to do. Father Jerome is a notorious apostate. He dies the day after to-morrow in the great Auto." The brother looked longingly at those tempting lips.

"Still," he added, after a moment's pause, "I may be able to do it."

"Very well, Father," replied Carmen, "I will wait in yonder hedge while you deliver my present. When you take your oath that you have executed my commission faithfully, you shall be duly rewarded."

The gypsy smiled and showed a row of pearly

teeth. Intoxicated by the sight of so much loveliness, the lay brother hastened to the convent.

After a short absence he reappeared.

"Your request has been fulfilled," he said, laying his hand on the crucifix.

A tender look came into the gypsy's face, which the brother was quick to note. He would have been much chagrined had he known that Carmen was thinking of the suffering captive in his cell, instead of himself.

"You have done well!" she said at length. "I will keep my part of the bargain."

Thereupon she held up her scarlet lips, with an inward sense of loathing and disgust toward the round, good-natured, expressionless face of the Dominican friar.

"With a kiss I have helped to unlock your prison door, good Father Jerome," thought the maiden as she sped away as agile as a deer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A RASH ACT.

LET us return to Don Alfonso.

Disheartened at his meagre success, he had returned to San Sebastian, after exacting a promise from Doña Inez that she would inform him of the date of the next Auto in season for him to reach Valladolid. The word came in due time. The great Auto was to be held the 8th of October, as a sort of nuptial celebration for King Felipe, who had just espoused the youthful Isabella of France. Fray Domingo de Rojas, Don Carlos de Seso, his servant Juan Sanchez, and Father Jerome Ortiz were to be burned alive, as "professed impenitent heretics." These human beings were to be the blazing torches which should light this second Nero to his nuptial couch.

At the request of Felipe, the pope issued a bull which was addressed to the Grand Inquisitor Valdez, directing him to consign to the flames all prisoners whatever, even those who were not accused of having "relapsed." Llorente, the Spanish historian, said, "Had the king and the inquisi-

tors never committed any other evil, this alone would be sufficient to consign their names to eternal infamy."

Great preparations were therefore being made to strike terror to the hearts of all heretics, and to gratify the king's savage bigotry. Don Alfonso, half distracted by his longings to see his beloved friend once more, and maddened with rage at the merciless inquisitors, arrived in Valladolid two days before the Auto.

It was evening. The young nobleman bade his servant wait for him at the King's Inn, and then hardly knowing what he did, he walked in the direction of the House of the Jesuits. A wild, irresistible longing came over him to confront Father Jerome's old instructor, and to denounce the great general to his face. To be sure, curses were futile, but they would help to relieve the terrible tension of his brain. He knocked loudly upon the door. It was approaching the midnight hour, and it was some moments before the sleepy lay brother answered the imperative summons.

"Is General Borgia within?"

"He is."

"Tell him that I desire an audience with him at once."

The brother looked at the wild, haggard face, as though he doubted the sanity of the man before him. He hesitated.

"The hour is late, señor, and the general is at his private devotions in the oratory. I do not like to disturb him."

Don Alfonso uttered a terrible oath. Taking his purse from his pocket, he flung it down before the lay brother. "Take that !" he said hoarsely, "and gain for me an interview with the general."

With a deprecating gesture, the brother picked up the purse and slipped it between the folds of his robe. Then he said, "What name shall I announce to his reverence ?"

"Don Alfonso de Menillo, a friend of that condemned heretic, Father Jerome Ortiz."

The lay brother looked disturbed at the mention of the degraded Jesuit monk, and hastily crossed himself. He then proceeded to deliver his message. He returned directly, with the assurance that his Excellency would receive Don Alfonso with pleasure.

As he entered the oratory, General Borgia saluted the young nobleman with a courteous, "Pax Vobiscum, my son."

Don Alfonso made no reply, but glared at the Jesuit with angry eyes. Then he said fiercely, "Dare you prate to me of peace ? Know you not that I love Jerome Ortiz as a brother ? Fiend, murderer that you are, I scorn the peace which you presume to cast in my face !"

General Borgia turned pale, and grasped his

rosary with clenched fingers. He was no coward, but the presence of an armed madman at midnight was, to say the least, rather startling.

"You use questionable language, Don Alfonso. If you have any regard for your liberty, you had better keep your anger within bounds. Knowing your affection for your apostate friend, I am willing to grant you forgiveness for your offensive words."

"I want not your forgiveness!" said Don Alfonso. "I came to you at this time, that for once in your life you should hear plain speaking. You and the other members of the Holy Tribunal are murderers, children of the devil! You betray and shed innocent blood! The purest and noblest of the sons and daughters of Spain you have put to death or doomed to perpetual imprisonment. I curse you, yes curse you, for your infamous work! Nay more, I beg on my bended knees that God's curse may rest upon you, when you rise up in the morning and when you lie down at night!"

General Borgia had tried in vain to check this torrent of fierce invectives, but Don Alfonso did not stop until his breath failed.

"Did I not think you mad, young man," said the Jesuit sternly, "I should order your immediate arrest. "As it is, I will summon the lay brother to show you the door. I will not lower myself to talk farther with you. When you have regained

control of your passion, I will grant you another interview."

He reached for the bell, but with one bound Don Alfonso sprang to his side and grasped his arm.

"You *shall* hear me, General Borgia. I will speak, and no one shall hinder me. The blood of the innocent cries from the ground. It is time that the stones of which yonder Santa Casa is built were moved to mutiny, at the terrible work of destruction which goes on within those unhalloved walls. How long, O Lord, wilt thou wait? When wilt thou arise to avenge the blood of thy saints? Remember one thing, General Borgia. There cometh a day when God, the righteous Judge, shall smite the earth till it trembles: the sun shall become as sackcloth, the moon shall turn to blood, the stars shall fall from the heavens, and the firmament shall be shrivelled like a scroll, the islands shall flee, and the everlasting mountains shall sink down in dismay at the dread approach of Jehovah. And where, O Jesuit, think you, shall guilty man be found, in that awful day? The great Avenger will plant his foot upon his neck, and he shall taste from that two-edged sword the wrath of God, which he has braved too fiercely and too long."

"Enough!" said General Borgia. "You forget that you are addressing a servant of Jesus."

"It is not the least of your offences that you use the name of Jesus to sanction all these crimes." Unconsciously Don Alfonso relaxed his hold of the Jesuit's arm, and a loud peal rang throughout the house.

"You have been speaking under the stress of great mental excitement," said General Borgia, "and I do not consider your insane ravings worth repeating. But I do consider it necessary to inquire into your religious belief. You have been under suspicion before now, but the matter was dropped on account of your distinguished-relatives, and also because you behaved in an orthodox manner. After this disgraceful procedure on your part, I warn you that your case will be attended to in the near future. For the sake of the eminent services which your uncle, the Count de Menillo, has rendered the church, I give you this hint, which you may take for what you consider it worth."

The lay brother now appeared. "Show the Señor Don Alfonso the door. Our interview is ended." General Borgia then returned to his interrupted devotions.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A RAY OF HOPE.

THE next morning, Don Alfonso bethought himself of a last resort to save, or at least relieve, his friend's life: namely, to win the favor of the king's bride.

The royal couple had been magnificently entertained at several of the important cities of Spain. There had been presented for their enjoyment bull-fights, the Moorish sport of the *canas* or tilt of reeds, tournaments on horseback and on foot, in which Philip, armed cap-a-pie, did his *devoir* in the presence of his lovely consort and won her gentle plaudits. At Toledo, especially, the preparations for the reception of the royal pair were on a grand scale, and were worthy the renown of that ancient capital of the Visigoths. Philip and his bride had now arrived in Valladolid, to witness the solemn Auto de Fé.

Don Alfonso arrayed himself with great care, and hastened to the palace, and besought the grand chamberlain, with whom he was acquainted,

to grant him a brief audience with the queen. The chamberlain refused to carry his request to her Majesty.

"Our gracious queen is resting, and your errand must wait. I would not disturb her at this time for a handful of ducats. Return this afternoon, and I will see what I can do for you."

"That will be too late to serve my purpose," replied Don Alfonso. "For the love of God grant me one moment's speech with her!"

"It is impossible!"

"How so?" inquired a gentle voice from above. "I beg of you, my lord chamberlain, not to deprive me of the pleasure of assisting my subjects when they have need."

The youthful queen appeared on the stairs accompanied by her maid of honor. She was only fifteen years of age, but tall and comely, with dark eyes and delicate features. There was a sweetness mingled with the dignity of her deportment, which endeared her to all.

"So attractive was she," writes the biographer of her reign, "that no cavalier durst look on her long, for fear of losing his heart, which in that jealous court might have proved the loss of his life." As her marriage with Felipe had formed one of the articles in the treaty with France, she was named by the Spaniards "Isabel de la Paz," Isabella of the Peace. Her own countrymen no

less fondly styled her "the Olive Branch of Peace," indicating her sweetness of disposition. It was apparent to all that the savage, morose Philip was infatuated with his girl-bride, and he lavished upon her those lover-like attentions for which his former wife, Mary Tudor, pined in vain.

The chamberlain was confused at the sudden appearance of the queen, and stammered his apologies, which were graciously accepted.

"What do you desire, noble caballero?" she asked, turning to Don Alfonso.

"A moment's private audience with your Majesty, to prefer a request."

The queen motioned the young man toward a small but lofty room, its casements looking out on the richly carved front of San Pablo. This room was a species of closet, such as is often found in palaces, and is quite often used for private audiences, or as a royal retiring room. The walls were hung with rich tapestries, illustrating the triumphs of the Cid Campeador. The furniture was of exquisite design. Steel mirrors, in elegant frames, reflected the sunshine.

"Most noble and illustrious sovereign," began Don Alfonso, "I crave your pardon for obtruding myself so unceremoniously, but my errand is one of life or death. I came to ask you to intercede with the king for the life of one of those unfortunate heretics who is doomed to die to-morrow,

in the flames of the Auto. O, noble queen, you have a kind and merciful heart! No man looking into your face could refuse you anything. Plead with the king for the life of my friend, and the world will ring with praises for your merciful act."

"You request is a singular one, señor caballero. Is your friend a penitent?"

"Not in the sense you mean," replied Don Alfonso hesitatingly. "His conscience forbids him to recant. But he is a noble man and as dear to me as a brother."

The queen looked displeased. "You ask an impossible favor from my hands, señor. I cannot ask the king for the life of a professed impenitent heretic. I would not dare to anger my lord and sovereign to the extent of seeking his presence to plead for the life of an obstinate rebel. Had your friend been a penitent, the case would be different. Did you not know, that since the shipwreck which occurred when the king was returning from the Netherlands, he has devoted the remainder of his life to the grand mission of exterminating heresy from his domains? I also am a Catholic, and although I do not like unnecessary cruelty and suffering, it seems right to me that those who reject mercy should die."

"Then there is no hope for my friend?" said Don Alfonso in despair.

"None whatever, unless he recants," replied Isabella. "But I would save you from the same fate," she added, with an admiring glance at the handsome, gloomy face. "If I should report this interview, your arrest would be certain to follow. But I will not betray you. Have you a family?"

"I have a beloved wife."

"My advice to you, señor, is this: Take your wife and reside out of Spain until these troublous times are over. Your interest in this heretic must have been noticed, especially if you have spoken as rashly elsewhere as you have here. Flee while yet there is an opportunity. And now adios, señor caballero. I am sorry that I can do nothing to relieve your distress."

Don Alfonso pressed a fervent kiss on the hand that was graciously extended to him, and murmured inarticulate thanks. As he was about leaving the audience chamber, his eyes rested on a full-length portrait of the king. The artist had faithfully copied the insignificant, narrow-chested figure, the countenance with its broad forehead, light blue eyes, and aquiline nose. The lower part of his face resembled some wild beast's with its heavy hanging lip, vast mouth, and protruding jaw. The expression of the face was false and cruel, "the serene incarnation of passionless evil." One who knew his character well, said that "his dagger followed close upon his smile."

Looking upon this vindictive, sensual face, and realizing for the first time in his life the real character of the man, he could have spurned the sovereign whom he once ignorantly adored.

Discouraged and sad, Don Alfonso wandered forth into the street. A countryman jostled rudely against him, and recalled his wandering senses.

"A thousand pardons, noble caballero;" then with a look of recognition the man said, "Have I the distinguished honor of addressing the señor Don Alfonso de Menillo?"

"That is my name."

"You are the friend of Father Jerome Ortiz who dies to-morrow?"

Don Alfonso's face blanched, but he answered without hesitation, "I am."

"Will your lordship please step aside into this alley for a moment?" said the countryman; "I have something to say to you which will interest you."

Don Alfonso complied.

Lowering his voice to a whisper, the stranger said, "I am Benito, the gypsy chief, upon whose head a price has been set. Father Jerome Ortiz once did me a noble service, and I promised him that if he ever needed help I would give my life to aid him. I have a plan on foot which, if it succeeds, will set your friend free to-night. Should you like to help us?"

"Most assuredly," was the eager response.

"Then I will tell you what to do. Take a good rest to-day. Then after disguising yourself and your servant, ride out of the city at sunset, well armed. Halt in the vicinity of the Devil's Cross, and conceal yourselves until we appear about midnight. I am afraid we may have trouble with the Hermandad, in which case we shall need your assistance."

With a look of joy, Don Alfonso grasped his companion's hand. "God will certainly reward you for your kindness. May his blessing attend your steps."

He then repaired quickly and with a light heart to the King's Inn.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE ESCAPE.

FATHER JEROME and Don Paulos did not again refer to the terrible Auto de Fé. The morning before this horrible spectacle was to take place, one of the Dominican lay brothers brought a small loaf of bread and a fine bunch of grapes into the cell.

"These are from a gypsy maiden," he said. "She desired me to bring these tokens of remembrance."

The brother retired to keep his tryst, and Father Jerome looked at these gifts with interest. Carmen, the gypsy maid, must have sent them ! He had almost forgotten her existence, having seen her only once or twice since he rescued her from the clutches of Don Luis de Menoz. Her gratitude, and her father's promise of help in time of peril flashed across his mind. When the door of the cell had closed, he seized the wheaten loaf and tore it apart. His father watched him in astonishment. A slip of paper rewarded his search. On

it were scrawled these words: "Eat and sleep well to-day. Your friends will attempt a rescue to-night. Be on the watch for us."

Father Jerome had long ago relinquished all hope of life. When he read this cheering announcement he was surprised to find what delightful sensations of hope pervaded his being. His pulse beat tumultuously. Life, freedom, Doña Irene, could they be for him?

He fell upon his knees and audibly returned thanks to God. Then turning to Don Paulos, he said, "Father, my beloved father! if an honorable escape from these hateful prison walls were possible, would you fly with me?"

It was some moments before this great announcement penetrated the sluggish brain. When he finally comprehended, Don Paulos said, "Whither thou goest I will go. But are you not deceiving yourself with a false hope, my son? I never heard of a prisoner escaping from the clutches of the Inquisition."

"We are not in the Santa Casa, father. The system of espionage is not as rigid in the Dominican prison as there. I have unbounded faith in Benito, the gypsy chief, and he will save us or perish in the attempt."

"Perhaps he cannot save both of us, my son. If so, leave me, and save yourself. You are young. Life will blossom for you again. As for me, the

springs of enjoyment are forever dried. At the longest, I can live but a few years more."

"I shall never forsake you, my father. If both of us cannot walk out of these prison doors, both of us will remain. *Paciencia*, dear father! We are in God's hands. Let us await his providence in calm submission."

Father Jerome laid himself on his couch and was directly sleeping as sweetly as a child. His father imitated his example.

It was a dark, gloomy evening. A drizzling rain had set in late in the afternoon, and the night promised to be a disagreeable one. A solemn Chapter was being held in the Santa Casa, at which Father Lantigua, General Borgia, and the other members of the Holy Tribunal met, in order to perfect arrangements for the Auto de Fé.

Twenty-nine heretics were to appear on the morrow. Sixteen were reconciled and thirteen were to receive the death penalty.

During the absence of the prior the rules of the convent were observed with less vigilance, and this fact was known to the two men who were waiting in the shadow of a clump of trees for a favorable moment for action. These men were clad in the black robes and cowls worn by the spies of the Inquisition, and carried lanterns.

The clock in the cathedral tower had just chimed the hour of nine, when these two Familiars

stepped boldly to the front entrance to the convent, and knocked loudly. The lay brother answered the summons.

"We have a message to give you for the prior," said Benito.

The brother ushered them into the convent parlor, and before he realized what manner of men his visitors were, a heavy hand was laid across his mouth, his arms and legs were tied, and a gag inserted in his mouth, so that in an incredibly short time the lay brother was a helpless captive.

"What shall we do with him, Christy?"

"Here is a large clothes-press. Shove him in there and lock the door. Here is the bunch of keys. Let us attend to our mission at once."

Giving the Dominican a vicious kick into the closet, the gypsies set out on their perilous undertaking.

The cells were on the opposite side of the building from where they were. The long corridors were traversed in safety. The monks had retired, each to his room to engage in special devotions for the souls of the heretics, and for the welfare of the Holy Church. They now descended a flight of stone steps, and found themselves in a wide corridor, on each side of which were ranged cells. The walls were granite, and the blocks were securely cemented together. The doors of the cells were of massive timbers, heavily barred with iron.

The Santa Casa being crowded, some of the prisoners had been transferred to this prison for safe keeping.

"This," whispered Benito, taking up a key which was larger than the rest, and which was of curious workmanship, "I suspect is the master-key, and will fit the locks on all the cells. Carmen said that the window of Father Jerome's cell looked out on the court, so he must be somewhere on the right side of the corridor."

Benito commenced with the first cell, and unlocked the massive door. A man who lay upon a straw bed moved uneasily, then lifting his head he cried in affright, "Hast thou come to torture me more?" The face was not that of Father Jerome, and Benito quietly closed and locked the door. At the door of the next cell he breathed rather than spoke the words, "Father Jerome!"

There was no response, and they moved noiselessly to the next door and repeated the same words.

"Here!" came the reply in soft tones.

Benito turned the key in the lock and both men entered. The chief then locked the door on the inside.

Father Jerome and Don Paulos were awaiting their visitors with suppressed excitement. Turning to Benito, Father Jerome said, "This is my father, who has been shut up within these walls

for twenty years. Unless he can escape with me, I shall not leave this cell."

The gypsy chief turned to Christy.

"Didst thou bring the extra suit?"

"Yes, master."

"Then your father can accompany us in safety. Please don these suits quickly, señors."

Benito and his man had each concealed under their robes an extra suit of the same kind, which they now produced. The captives were soon arrayed in the hateful garments of the Familiars.

Hasty footsteps were now heard coming down the corridor. The prior had unexpectedly returned, and hearing unusual sounds from below, he had hastened to learn their meaning. He was accompanied by Father Padilla, who desired to test and to taunt his victim once more before the morrow.

Benito hastily covered his robe over the lanterns. A look was on his dark face which betokened ill to those who dared oppose his exit from this dismal place. The blood froze in Father Jerome's veins, and he shivered. Don Paulos looked like one bereft of reason.

The footsteps came nearer. Benito drew a dagger and motioned his companion to do the same. Some one took a key and fitted it in the lock, and the door of the cell was thrown open. Father Lantigua held up a lantern, and looked in surprise at

what appeared to be four Familiars and no prisoners. A sudden conviction dawned upon him.

"There is treachery here!" he exclaimed.

In a trice Christy was upon him, while Benito seized the Superior of the House of the Jesuits. Both of the gypsies were strong and sinewy, and they had no difficulty in binding and gagging the surprised churchmen. A cry of pain and a howl of rage had been uttered at the outset, but as such sounds were of common occurrence in "Holy Houses," no attention was paid to them. Benito had stripped the robe from Father Padilla, and tearing it into strips, he had the wherewithal to bind these unfortunate churchmen, hand and foot.

"Lie there, you demons!" he muttered, as he assisted them to the bed of straw, with sundry eloquent kicks and shoves. "I hope you will have to lie there and rot until the judgment day. You may have this to comfort you, that this night Father Jerome and Don Paulos will be free men. I will kill any man who opposes me this night. I would not hesitate to kill you both, had not Father Jerome just begged for your worthless lives."

Christy began to show signs of impatience. "Let us be off, chief. We have already stayed here longer than we planned. Good-night, your reverences. I trust you will have refreshing slumbers and pleasant dreams." With this expression of grim humor, Benito and his companions left

the cell, carefully locking the door after them. Then two by two they passed down the corridor. Before they reached the stone steps, footsteps were heard in the upper corridor. "Some one else is coming down here!" whispered Benito. "We must hide." There were at regular intervals, niches, and obscuring the light from the lanterns, the little party anxiously awaited events. The door at the head of the stairs opened, and a couple of friars began the descent. Evidently they were in search of Father Lantigua. They first went to cell No. 1, and opening the door entered, closing the door behind them. Benito crept cautiously from his hiding-place and slipped a large iron bolt, making the friars prisoners. Then with the assistance of the chief and Christy, the feeble captives were hurried up the steps. They met no one in the upper corridor, although they could hear the monks chanting the service of the church. In a few moments they were outside the convent, and were breathing God's pure air. The sense of impending danger, instead of paralyzing the captives, steadied their nerves for the time being.

Suddenly the little party came upon a squad of soldiers, who were prowling about the city, singing ribald songs, and indulging in coarse jests. Profound silence, and a respectful clearing of the way greeted these supposed spies of the Inquisition. A free pass was granted the Familiars

everywhere, and no one dared to inquire, "Why do ye this or that?" This ordeal was almost too much for Don Paulos. His long confinement had wrought havoc with his nerves. His breath came in gasps, and now and then a pitiful sob was heard. Poor man! Every one he met he fancied was a spy of the Inquisition. Every human being seemed like a mortal enemy.

"Can we not take some more unfrequented street?" whispered Father Jerome.

By way of answer, Benito pointed to a dark alley down which they passed. They reached the city gate in safety, and although the guard looked a little surprised to see so many holy men leaving the capital at this unseemly hour, no questions were asked.

About half a mile across the *vega* was the Devil's Cross, and it was there that they found Don Alfonso and his servant awaiting them, with horses. The meeting between Father Jerome and his friend was affecting.

"You here, dear Alfonso, and safe? Truly my cup runneth over," cried Father Jerome.

"Yes, my friend, and I am told that a greater surprise awaits you at the gypsy camp. Your troubles are now ended, my comrade. A new life full of happiness awaits you."

"If God will!" said Father Jerome solemnly. There was no time for further conversation, for

Benito bade them mount the horses and prepare for a long and dangerous ride. "We must be on the lookout for the wandering bands of *Hermandad*, which are continually scouring the country in search of criminals. But we are now prepared to make a desperate fight, since we have been reinforced by two able-bodied men."

They rode several miles without incident, coming out at last upon an old gray stone cross, which marked the spot where the two roads met. All about them was forest. The rain had now ceased, and the moon was struggling to appear through the dark clouds. As they turned their horses to take the left-hand road, six mounted horsemen rode out of an ambush where they had been concealed, and surrounded the little party. They were the dreaded *Hermandad*, or Brotherhood of local police.

"Surrender or we fire!" cried the leader.

The only reply which the party of fugitives gave was a discharge of firearms, and a bold dash was made to pass the officers. The onslaught was so unexpected that the policemen were, for the instant, disconcerted. Recovering from their surprise, they returned the fire. Christy was slightly wounded in the shoulder, and a bullet grazed Father Jerome's cheek, but they were otherwise unharmed.

The *Hermandad* gave chase, but the horses pro-

vided by Benito were fresher and swifter, and they easily outdistanced their enemies. Before very long they left the highway and followed a trail through the woods. At last they halted before an old building, and Benito rapped loudly on the door. A dwarf answered the summons.

“*Quién es ?*” he inquired.

“*Friends,*” replied Benito.

“*Who knows !*” returned the surly little man.

“*The password, señors !*”

“*Daggers are sharp to cut knots !*” said Benito.

“*All right, enter !*” The bolts were drawn, and the door opened cautiously. The dwarf placed some refreshments before the little party. They then lay down on the floor before the open fire to rest, as the remainder of their journey was to be accomplished on foot.

The dwarf took their horses to a place prepared for them in the heart of the forest, and agreed to care for them until they were needed.

After an hour’s rest, the fugitives again sallied forth. Christy appeared to be perfectly at home in this labyrinth of bushes and trees, and guided them with unerring instinct. They were obliged to halt frequently to rest. As it was, Father Jerome and Don Paulos would have dropped from exhaustion, had it not been for the strong arms of their friends. The morning light was beginning to show in the east, when they reached the borders

of a deep ravine. Down the steep sides they crept cautiously, and as the sun rose above the horizon they reached the gypsy encampment, weary and footsore.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AT THE GYPSY CAMP.

THE scene which greeted their eyes was picturesque. A large fire of brushwood was burning in the centre of a wide clearing, and about that cheerful blaze lounged many dusky figures. Carmen, her beautiful face glowing with pleasure, ran to meet them. She raised Father Jerome's outstretched hand and pressed a kiss upon it.

"Welcome, a thousand times welcome to the home of the gypsies, señors ! Follow me !"

There were several tents ranged in a semi-circle, and into the largest of these, which stood a little apart from the rest, Carmen guided her guests. Father Jerome looked about him with some curiosity. Alfonso had hinted at a surprise. The covering at the door of the tent was thrown back. Who was this woman, with a face as radiant as the dawn, moving with swift feet toward them ?

"Irene, my beloved !" cried Father Jerome in a voice which brought tears to the eyes of his listeners.

The priest stretched out his arms toward the

woman he loved, but the overwrought nerves gave way at last, and he fell senseless at the feet of Doña Irene.

This swoon was the beginning of a serious illness, which lasted several weeks, and which brought Father Jerome to the verge of the grave. For days his life hung by a thread. At last he regained his consciousness, and Dr. Sebastian pronounced the crisis past and recovery certain.

When the sick man opened his eyes with the light of reason in them, he saw the sweet face of Doña Irene bending over him. He reached out his hand and clasped the soft fingers. His eyes eagerly sought her face. At this mute appeal, she bent down and pressed her lips to his.

“Mine at last !” he murmured.

“Yes, dearest. God has blessed our love. To him be all the praise.”

The sufferer’s face wore a look of supreme satisfaction, and turning from the light, he fell into a deep sleep. This was the beginning of a speedy convalescence. Father Jerome proved to be an exacting invalid. He could not bear to waken from sleep and find Doña Irene gone.

“He had ceased

To live within himself : she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts
Which terminated all : upon a tone,
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow
And his cheek change tempestuously.”

It was a day of rejoicing for all when Father Jerome was able to leave the tent, and leaning on the arm of Doña Irene, walked to the fringe of pines which skirted the ravine. They sat down in the cool fragrant shade to rest. Irene rose to gather a spray of scarlet blossoms that caught her fancy. Father Jerome followed her with fond eyes. He noted the perfect features, the depth and purity of expression on that rarely beautiful face, and the rounded figure on which nature had lavished every feminine charm, and he exulted in the proud sense of possessorship.

“Irene !”

She ran quickly to her lover’s side, and raised her questioning eyes to his.

“What is it, beloved ?”

Her soft fingers clasped his; her sweet lips were invitingly near.

Father Jerome gathered her in a long, close embrace.

“Dear heart,” he said at length, “if our poor human love is so strong, so sweet, what must God’s love be ! Let us not for one moment forget that love which is limitless, unchangeable.”

A long silence fell between them, and glancing up at her companion, Irene noticed that the old shadow was resting on the beloved face.

“What is troubling you ?” she anxiously inquired.

After a momentary hesitation, Father Jerome said, "Beloved, can you trust your future happiness to the keeping of one who has broken the most sacred oaths a man can take? Ay de mí! I feel unworthy of your love."

"Dear heart, I thought that question was forever laid aside. The chains of superstition and priestcraft which men wove around you, God has broken. Let us give him thanks, and accept the gift of love as from his kind hand. For myself, I shall consider it my 'title of honor' to be the wife of Don Rodrigo Valero."

A gleam of pleasure appeared on Father Jerome's face at the sound of his new name, and he stooped and kissed the lips which were trembling with strong emotion. This question was never raised between them again.

Don Alfonso felt obliged to leave the gypsy camp in a few days after his arrival, for he thought it the part of wisdom to heed General Borgia's warning and flee the country. He decided to sail for England, as his wife had relatives in London who would gladly give them shelter. Queen Elizabeth had taken neutral ground and, so far, had resisted all efforts put forth to make her give up the heretics who had emigrated to her shores.

When Don Alfonso asked Dr. Sebastian where he should take up his residence, the latter replied,

“That depends entirely upon Father Jerome’s will in the matter. I had thought of going to Paris, where my son resides, but rumor informs us that persecution has already begun among the Huguenots. The French monarch is hand and glove with King Philip, and especially so since the marriage of our sovereign. As soon as we decide the question we will send you word by the king’s post.”

On Don Alfonso’s trip to San Sebastian, and his subsequent removal to England, we have not time to dwell; it is enough to know that the trip was accomplished in safety. The presence of Father Cyprian removed all suspicions. The standing of Don Alfonso as an orthodox Catholic gentleman was undisputed, and the party were allowed to go on board ship, unchallenged.

Don Manuel was rejoiced at his son’s happiness. The sight of Doña Irene awoke sad but precious memories of another bright face and proud young figure. As long as he lived, his faithful heart would remain loyal to the memory of sweet Doña Dolores Valero. A strong friendship had sprung up between Don Manuel and Dr. Sebastian, and they had many talks over the sad condition of affairs in Spain, and the dark outlook for the future. Don Manuel’s health grew daily more firm, and his mental faculties steadily improved. Now that he had his son to live for, he seemed endowed with a fresh lease of life.

It became necessary to come to some decision respecting the future. A family conclave was therefore held, and Father Jerome was pressed to give his opinion. After being assured by Dr. Sebastian and Don Manuel that they had no choice of places, Father Jerome finally admitted that he preferred Wittenberg, the home of Luther, to any other spot outside of Spain.

"There at least," he said, "it is an honor to be called a Lutheran. Besides," he added with a significant glance at his betrothed, "Wittenberg is the place where the wife of an apostate monk will not be scorned. I have understood that the name of Catherine Von Bora is revered equally with that of the great Luther, in that German city."

"To Wittenberg, then, let us go," said Dr. Sebastian. "I think we might dwell there in peace and safety. The elector John of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, Albert Duke of Prussia, and several other of the princes are evangelical in doctrine, and since the peace of Augsburg Protestantism has acquired a legal standing in Germany. Let us emigrate to that country, and found a home to which our persecuted brethren can flee. Now that Father Jerome is able to travel, I think we had better lose no time in leaving Spain."

Benito was sorry to part with his friends, but he recognized the wisdom of their decision. He promised to follow them at no distant day. Words

failed Father Jerome and his friends when they tried to express their gratitude to the gypsy chief and his daughter Carmen, for the valuable services each had rendered. The tears ran down Carmen's cheeks as she bade the Doña Irene and Father Jerome good-bye. In the heart of this daughter of the forest there were noble and generous impulses.

Benito offered to guide the party overland to the shores of the Bay of Biscay, where they could take passage to England and from thence to Germany. The gypsy chief had friends among the sea-captains, and he felt confident that for a consideration he could smuggle the little party on board some sailing vessel. We will spare the reader the harrowing details of this long and hazardous journey. After many thrilling experiences and hairbreadth escapes, the faithful Benito secured a passage for his friends in the sailing vessel "The Hesperus," bound for English shores.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT WITTENBERG.

A YEAR after the events recorded in the previous chapter, an elderly man clad in the costume of a Spanish peasant might have been seen walking with uncertain steps through the streets of Wittenberg.

"Can you tell me where I can find a Spanish monk, Father Jerome Ortiz?" he inquired of a passer-by.

"Do not know any such person. Monks are not popular in Wittenberg just at present."

"Very likely he goes by the name of Valero. Know you any one bearing that name?"

"If you mean the Magister Valero, you will find him conducting a religious service in the University Chapel."

The ancient University of Wittenberg was pointed out to the peasant, who walked with weary steps toward the spot designated.

In a large hall, entirely devoid of ornamentation, were gathered several hundred students. They were the sons of the men who had known and re-

vered that "Teutonic impersonation of strength," Luther, and who had helped to promulgate his doctrines. The fathers of these students had lived in the storm which preceded the birth of religious liberty. Their sons were enjoying the calm after-glow, and were striving, with more or less eagerness, to catch some sunset rays from this glorious past, that they in turn might pass them on to the next generation.

These young men were listening to the eloquent words and forceful logic of Magister Valero, who had been appointed to occupy the chair of homiletics, and to conduct daily Lutheran services in the university chapel.

The peasant looked eagerly at the preacher. He was attired in the costume adopted by the Lutheran ministers of his time. His luxuriant hair, tinged with silver, covered the tonsure made by the Church of Rome. With the casting aside of the monastic garb, he seemed like a new man. His figure was erect. There was life and vigor in every graceful gesture. His words were strong and convincing. He was just concluding his sermon, when the peasant entered the chapel. The full magnetic voice rang out like a clarion: "For Christ when he cometh is nothing else but joy and sweetness to a trembling and broken heart. I am covered under the shadow of Christ's wings, and dwell without fear under that most ample heaven of the for-

givenness of sins. Christ is our High Priest and our only Mediator. This is no heresy, but God's truth, and it must prevail. Let us henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but speaking the truth in love, may we grow up into him in all things who is the head, even Christ, to whom alone be dominion over conscience forever and ever."

The Spanish peasant crossed himself at these words, and looked around him as if expecting to see the Inquisitors enter and arrest the bold preacher. Truly Wittenberg was not Valladolid. Here, the words a man might utter to-day would not be turned into a weapon which should smite him on the morrow. "The calm of religious liberty had stilled the trembling of the lips, the flushing of the cheek, and the panting of the stifled chest."

The service was ended, and the students gathered about the popular young Magister, to listen to his words, but to-day they were brief. The preacher had noticed the entrance of the Castilian peasant and was anxious to learn who he was, and whether his errand was one of peace. He hastened into the vestibule, and there found the object of his search. One glance at the old, but kindly face was enough.

"Father Ambrose, dear Father Ambrose!" was his delighted cry.

Taking the old man's arm, and gently leading him beyond the gaze of the curious students, he said,

"Come with me to my home. Have you undertaken this long journey solely to find me?"

"Yes, my son, and to abide with you, if you can find room for an old broken-hearted man who has not long to live."

"We should be only too glad of the benediction of your presence," replied the Magister, "and I know that my dear wife and my father will say the same. Our home has been, and I trust always will be, a refuge for our tired and oppressed brethren. To-day there will be quite a gathering of friends at the parsonage, some of whom you know."

In a quiet street, in full view of the deserted monastery where Luther had made his home, stood a quaint old house covered with vines and moss. Its many windows, wide porches, and capacious chimneys, gave it a hospitable appearance. The house stood a little way from the street, and the walk to the door was flanked with beds of sweet-scented flowers. Doña Irene, now the honored, happy wife of the Magister Valero, came forward to greet her husband's friend. She remembered the old monk, and had always revered him for his kindness to the unfortunate Father

Jerome. The beautiful young matron in the flush of her radiant youth, with the light of love transfiguring her face, was a picture the beholder could not readily forget. A few words of tender greeting passed between husband and wife. They were lovers still, and always would be. They were "set each to the other, like perfect music unto noblest words."

Dr. Sebastian now came in from a long ride into the country, accompanied by Don Manuel Valero. The doctor had established quite a practice in the home of his adoption, and with his reading and his scientific researches was a happy as well as successful man. Just now he was occupied with a project which, if it materialized, would convert the old Augustinian convent into a hospital.

Don Manuel was comparatively a well man, although his long confinement in prison had left indelible traces on his face and his constitution. He busied himself with horticultural pursuits, and took keen delight in caring for the flowers and shrubs which made the old garden a glimpse of Paradise. His mind never recovered its natural vigor and tone, and many of the old superstitions and shreds of popery clung to his faith. But his gentle ways, his uniform sweetness of disposition, and fervent trust in God, proclaimed his kinship with the followers of Christ.

It was evident from the unusual bustle and con-

fusion that guests were expected. Two buxom German girls were assisting old Ursula, and flitted in and out of the large dining-hall, adding touches to the already tastefully arranged table.

The sound of carriage wheels was heard. A young man, tenderly carrying a precious bundle wrapped in shawls, alighted, followed by his sprightly, vivacious wife.

"Consuelo!" cried the Doña Irene, as she ran to meet her friend.

It was indeed Don Alfonso de Menillo, Doña Consuelo, and their infant son Rodrigo, who had arrived from London to make their beloved friends a visit. Hardly had these greetings ceased, when Don Carlos Sebastian and his Huguenot wife appeared. The doctor's son was located in a small village a few miles out of Wittenberg, as a preacher of the gospel. He would never be a strong, robust man, and he had a halting step, but he did not aspire to great things. He was content to be allowed to work, even in a remote corner of the Master's kingdom. Together with his wife, the sweet sister Marguerite, they had fled from France on account of the persecution of the Huguenots.

After dinner, the party of friends gathered in the comfortable sitting-room. Father Ambrose, as the latest arrival from the homeland, was the guest of honor.

"Tell us first about yourself, Father Ambrose," said the Magister Valero. "How have you fared since I last saw you?"

Tears stood in the old priest's eyes as he answered, "My son, after your marvellous escape, the whole brotherhood of the Jesuits looked askance at me, knowing that I was your friend. I was immediately recalled from Soria, and have remained secluded in the convent at Valladolid, performing menial services for the brethren. Rarely was I allowed beyond the precincts of the convent. Father Gregory seemed to entertain the strongest dislike for me, after your escape. I believe that, secretly, General Borgia and Father Padilla were glad that you were not sacrificed in the Auto: the former because he really had feelings of affection for his favorite pupil, and the latter because the honor of the House of the Jesuits was at stake. One night I overheard Father Gregory say to the Superior, 'Father Ambrose is growing more imbecile every day. There is no doubt but what he is half crazed. He is far from being an ornament to our institution. Cannot he be removed quietly?' I waited to hear no more. Whether his words meant death or imprisonment, I know not. That very night I stole out of the convent and went directly to my peasants in Soria. They gladly concealed me until the search was over, and then they helped me out of the country.

I am a weary, lonely old man, whose longing is for rest. My faith in the Holy and Apostolic Catholic Church is sadly shaken. I am like a wrecked ship, whose timbers are lying useless and decaying on the shore. Yet I cling to the cross of my Lord and I long to hear him say, 'Weary pilgrim, come home.' "

"We cannot spare you yet, dear Father Ambrose," said the Magister. "Make your home with us. There are Christ's poor and sick and troubled ones to be helped. The Master has need of your service, if the Jesuits have not."

"Thanks, my son. Your words comfort me. I have cut the last cable which bound me to the shore of happy days, and a new life is beginning for me. Perhaps," he added, "you would like to learn the particulars of the great Auto, at which you were doomed to suffer the death penalty."

The Doña Irene shuddered and drew nearer her husband.

"The Don Carlos de Seso, Fray de Rojas, and the nobleman's servant Juan Sanchez, were burned alive at the stake. As De Rojas passed King Philip on his way to the Quemadero he said,

" 'Canst thou, sire, thus witness the torments of thy innocent subjects? Save us from so cruel a death! ' "

"Philip's answer was characteristic: 'I would myself carry wood to burn my son, were he such ■

wretch as thou !' The Fray attempted to speak farther, but the king waved his hand, and the gag was forced into the martyr's mouth, and was not removed at the stake.

"The night before De Seso was executed, he called for writing materials and wrote, not a confession of error, as the monks expected, but a confession of faith. He gave the document to an officer: 'This is the true faith of the Gospel, as opposed to that of the Church of Rome, which has been corrupted for ages. In this faith I wish to die.' He appeared on the scaffold gagged, but it was removed at the stake, and the monks once more clamored for his recantation. He replied, 'I could demonstrate to you that you ruin yourselves by not imitating my example. But there is no time. Executioners, light the pile which is to consume me.' He died without a groan or a symptom of a struggle."

Tears fell from the eyes of his listeners, at this record of Christian heroism.

"Did you hear aught concerning Julian the Little?" inquired Dr. Sebastian.

"Yes. All Spain has echoed with the account of the wonderful courage exhibited by the little dwarf. He was tortured repeatedly, but he would not implicate his brethren. At his trial he encouraged his fellow prisoners to endure as valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ. He was not allowed to

speaking at the stake, but he died calmly, even triumphantly."

"Have you ever heard anything concerning the fate of Maria Gonzalez?" said the Magister. "I have been fearful that sooner or later her kindly offices to the prisoners would be discovered and punished."

"Ay de mí!" said Father Ambrose. "Any child in Spain can tell you about the alcalde's servant, Maria Gonzalez. Her kindness was discovered, and she received two hundred lashes and was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. I do not know whether she lived through that terrible bastinado, but I pray that God may have taken her to himself ere this. The Reformed Church has been suppressed, and the Inquisition has triumphed."

Silence fell upon the little company after Father Ambrose had ceased. Then Don Alfonso said, "Will the Inquisition do for Spain what the word of God would have done had it been allowed free access? Will the Autos do more for her than that devoted band of men and women would have done, had their voices not been silenced?"

"The Lord reigneth!" said the Magister Valero solemnly. "God cannot die and he will take care of his own. 'Beyond the fatal dart of disease or the withering touch of age, or the missiles of battle or the cowardly arm of the Inquisition, he lives and reigns. His throne, girt with justice and

judgment, mercy and truth, is forever and ever !'
This is our hope and our consolation."

* * * * *

In the gray stone pile called the Escorial, which served the threefold purpose of palace, monastery, and tomb, Philip the Second lay dying. The purpose, to the accomplishing of which he had devoted his life, was cruelly fulfilled. The fires of the Inquisition burned without intermission until 1570, when they ceased from lack of material. Philip had wiped Lutheran heresy out of Spain. The Auto de Fé gleaned only a solitary Lutheran now and then, with which to furnish amusement for the pleasure-loving populace.

Even in this life the despotic tyrant was punished: a loathsome disease smote him, which ended his career. He was literally devoured alive by innumerable vermin, which had developed in his gouty joints; and this exquisite torture, which rivalled even the diabolical ingenuity of the Inquisition, served as a physical expiation of the enormities of his seventy-one years.

The historian tells us that the king's last words were these: "I die like a good Catholic, in faith and obedience to the Holy Roman Church." A paroxysm passed over this "bedful of crowned misery," and Philip, the second Nero, was dead.

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